# *From* Islamic Revivalism *to* Islamic Radicalism *in* Southeast Asia

## A Study of Jamā'ah Tablīgh in Malaysia and Indonesia

Kamaruzzaman Bustamam-Ahmad

UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI

# SYAIKH NURUDDIN AR-RANIRY

BANDA ACEH

# From Islamic Revivalism to Islamic Radicalism in Southeast Asia

2012

# From Islamic Revivalism to Islamic Radicalism in Southeast Asia

## *A Study of Jamā'ah Tablīgh in Malaysia and Indonesia*

By

Kamaruzzaman Bustamam-Ahmad

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

From Islamic Revivalism to Islamic Radicalism in Southeast Asia:
A Study of Jamā'ah Tablīgh in Malaysia and Indonesia

By Kamaruzzaman Bustamam-Ahmad

This book first published 2015

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Copyright © 2015 by Kamaruzzaman Bustamam-Ahmad

All rights for this book reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owner.

ISBN (10): 1-4438-7239-3
ISBN (13): 978-1-4438-7239-3

The book is dedicated to Prof. Joel S. Kahn
as my Guru in Anthropology,
Haji Bustamam-Ahmad (my father)
and Haji Budiman Muli (my grandfather)
who have showed the spirit of life in seeking of knowledge

# PHOTOS, FIGURES, TABLES AND DIAGRAMS


| | |
|---|---|
| Photo 1 | The *Masjid India* in the middle Masjid Jamek Market, Kuala Lumpur |
| Photo 2 | The *Kapitang Keling* mosque for the Indian community in Penang |
| Photo 3 | Photo taken from the east of the main hall prayer during *Shalāt Dhuhur* (noon prayer) |
| Photo 4 | The sleeping hall from south side of the main hall of prayer |
| Photo 5 | Tablīghist shops in the Sri Petaling *markāż* |
| Photo 6 | Car park area from east side of the *markāż* |
| Photo 7 | Security guards with sticks during preparations and bazaar for Saturday night gathering (*malam markāż*) |
| Photo 8 | The site of *ijtimā'* in Pekan Baru |
| Photo 9 | The bazaar at *ijtimā'* in Pekan Baru |
| Photo 10 | Picture taken 300 metres from main stage during late noon prayer (*shalāt 'Ashar*) |
| Photo 11 | The *karkūn* took rest and listened to *bayān* in a provincial tent |
| Photo 12 | The main stage of ritual of *ijtimā'* before the prayer |
| Photo 13 | The situation at main stage during and after prayer |
| Photo 14 | The *bayān* during *khurūj* in Kuala Lumpur |
| Photo 15 | The *bayān* after Subuh prayer in Cot Goh, Banda Aceh |
| Photo 16 | The participant of *khurūj* in *bayān* session |
| Diagram 1 | The setting of *markāż* |
| Diagram 2 | The structural organization of Jamā'ah Tablīgh |
| Figure 1 | The levels of human consciousness |
| Figure 2 | The six points |
| Table 1 | Chronology of the first *jamā'ah* sent abroad |
| Table 2 | The six points of Jamā'ah Tablīgh, six pillars of Muslim faith, and five pillars of Islam |

# GLOSSARY

| | |
|---|---|
| ABIM | Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia |
| AICC | Association of Indian Chambers of Commerce |
| *Amīr* | Head |
| *amīr saf* | leader for *khuruj* |
| *baju koko* | traditional Muslim clothes for praying |
| *Barisan Nasional* | National Front, one of the coalition parties in Malaysia |
| *Bayān hidayah* | religious sermon before *khuruj* |
| *Bayān tangguh* | religious sermon before returning home |
| *Bidadari* | beautiful woman in Paradise |
| *Bumiputra* | of Malay origin |
| *Chillah* | retreat for forty days. |
| *Da'ī* | Islamic preachers |
| *Da'wa* | Islamic missionary |
| *Dalīl* | guide |
| FIO | Federation of Indian Organisations |
| *Fitnah* | gossip |
| *Halaqah* | local headquarters |
| *ġast* | inviting people to mosque |
| HMI | Islamic University Students Association |
| IAIN | State Institute of Islamic Studies |
| *'Ibadah* | worship |
| *Ijtima'i* | public activities |
| *Ikrām al-muslim* | respect for Muslims |
| *Imām* | mosque prayer leader |
| IPB | India, Pakistan and Bangladesh |
| *Istiqāmah* | consistency |
| *Istiqbāl* | reception |
| JAKIM | Department of Islamic Development Malaysia |
| JAWI | Islamic Religious Department of Federal Territory |
| *Janggut* | beard |
| *Jorh* | regional meeting |
| KAMMI | Indonesian Muslim Student Action Union |
| *Kampung* | village |

| | |
|---|---|
| *Karguzari* | report of *da'wa* activities |
| *Karknū* | colloquial name for a member of the *Jamā'ah Tablīgh* in Malaysia and Indonesia |
| *Kenduri* | traditional feasts |
| *Khawwas* | intellectuals |
| *Khidmat* | voluntary service |
| *Kopiah* | cap/hat worn by Muslim men and by Indonesian men in general as a symbol of national identity. |
| *Kota pelajar* | city of students |
| *khātib* | Muslim who delivers *khutbah* during *Jum'ah* prayer |
| *Khutbah* | religious sermon during *Jum'ah* prayer |
| *Khuruj* | going out |
| *Khusūsi* | inviting respected people |
| KLIA | Kuala Lumpur International Airport |
| *Labi-labi* | traditional form of public transportation in Banda Aceh |
| MAIM | Islamic Religious Council of Melacca |
| *Martūrat* | female *karkūn* |
| MECA | Malayan Employer's Consultative |
| *Meunasah* | Acehnese term for a small prayer hall. |
| MIC | Malaysian Indian Congress |
| *malam markāż* | weekly gathering |
| *Markāż* | headquarters |
| *Masjid* | mosque |
| *Miswaks* | twigs of a tree used to clean teeth |
| *Mohalla* | a term to describe a neighbourhood or locality in the cities and towns of central and south Asia. |
| MMI | Indonesian Mujahidin Council |
| *Muftī* | Islamic jurist consult |
| *Mu'āsyarat* | social relationship |
| MUI | Indonesian 'Ulamā' Council |
| *Muhrim* | A close member of the family, man or woman, whom a Muslim cannot marry |
| *Mushawarah* | meeting |
| *Najis* | dirt, pollution |
| NCCI | National Chambers of Commerce and Industry |
| NEP | National Economic Policy |
| *Niyyat* | intention |

| | |
|---|---|
| Nizamuddin | International headquarters of *Jamā'ah Tablīgh* in India |
| NU | Nahdlatul 'Ulamā' |
| PAS | the Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party |
| PII | Indonesian Muslim Students |
| PERMIM | Malaysian Indo-Muslim Organization |
| PKPIM | National Association of Malaysian Islamic Students |
| PKS | *Partai Keadilan Sejahtera*, Prosperous Justice Party |
| PMII | Indonesia Islamic Students Movement |
| *Purdah* | veiling/screening of women |
| *Pondok* | Islamic boarding school |
| *Rumah Putih* | White House |
| *Sangatan* | consolidation |
| *Sarong* | traditional sheath dress for Muslim |
| *Satpam* | security guard |
| *Suddhi* | purification |
| *Sultan* | king |
| *Shalāt* | Muslim prayer five times a day, from early morning until late of night. The name of prayers are *shubuh*, *dhuhur*, *'ashar*, *magrib* and *'isha*. |
| *Tafakkud* | interview |
| *Ta'āruf* | introduction |
| *Ta'lim* | study |
| *Takaza* | request |
| *Teungku Imūm* | religious leader in Acehnese village |
| *Tukang becak* | trishaw driver |
| *Tukang bangunan* | labourer |
| UKM | Malaysian National University |
| *Ulil amri* | leaders |
| *Ummah* | Islamic community |
| UMNO | the United Malays National Organization |
| *Umrah* | a small *hajj* |
| *Unjank* | small wallet that hangs on the neck |
| *Ustāż* | teacher |
| *Warung* | traditional restaurant |
| YADIM | the Islamic *Da'wa* Foundation Malaysia |

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book is the result of my long intellectual journey to which many people have contributed, from Aceh to Yogyakarta, Jakarta to Kuala Lumpur, and Nakhon Sri Thammarat to Australia. Thus, present study is the final product of *gotong royong* (mutual assistance) not only with my supervisors, but also with some friends. I would like to express my deep gratitude to Professor Joel S. Kahn, as my first principal supervisor, who was not only a supervisor, but also like a father and friend when I met many difficulties, especially when I first started at La Trobe University. His patience in reading my poor English, his critical comments and his guidance are proof of his best efforts to make this thesis readable. He never pushed me to work very hard, but his way of treating me led me to work very hard. Pa' Joel did not control my work in Indonesia, which led me to control it myself. He was always ready to be my *guru*, discussing many interesting issues of anthropology and Islam.

My deep thanks also go Dr. Wendy Mee as my co-supervisor. She was a friend during the entire process of my study. She always gave me illuminating advice, especially when I faced problems during the writing process and faced emotional difficulties. Dr. Angus McIntyre became my principal supervisor in the middle of my candidature. My meetings with him encouraged me to do more reading on Indonesian studies. He helped me very much when Pa' Joel retired in 2008.

I am also indebted for much assistance from lecturers in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology: especially Trevor Hogan, Beryl Langer, Helen Lee, Rowan Ireland, Ray Madden, John Carroll, John Fitzgerald and Albert Gomez. At the Department of Sociology and Anthropology I would also like to thank the post-graduate staff: Mary, Barbara, Bronwyn Bardsley, Lisa Hunter and Kathy Ward, and RGSO staff member Sophie Mav who always there when I needed help, especially when I was off campus. Thinking of starting of this study reminds me of my fellow post-graduates in the department: Max Richter, Gerhard Hoffstaedter, Robby Peters, Malita, Karl, Abdul Razak, Anthony, Tracey Peters, Sudarkam and Rosyidah Mohammad. My study in Australia was made possible by generous funding from La Trobe University. My tuition fees were covered an International Postgraduate Research Scholarship and my living allowance by a La Trobe University

Post Graduate Scholarship. During my fieldwork, I also received a grant-in-aid from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. I would like to thank all of them for helping me.

When I conducted field work in my *kampong* and Sri Petaling I received enormous help from many people, especially in the beginning. I say thanks very much to all of *karkūn* in Cot Goh and Sri Petaling. Special thanks must be made to my *guru* in Aceh, Yogyakarta and Nakhon Sri Thammarat, and to Akh. Minhaji of the State Islamic University, Sunan Kalijaga. Patrick Jory, my former coordinator in the Regional Studies Program Walailak University, Thailand. I cannot forget the support I received from Dr. Uthai Dulyakassem who was dean of the faculty of Liberal Arts of Walailak University and been president of Silpakorn University in Bangkok, and Yusny Saby. My thanks also go to Bahrein Sugihen, Saleh Sjafei, Farid Wajdi, Nazaruddin, Syuhada, Delfi S., and Hasna Tuddar P.

Besides my *guru*, I also receive full support from my family. My grandfather, Haji Budiman Muli who lives in the jungle of North Aceh advised me to keep working on this project. I would like to thank my father, Haji Bustamam Ahmad and my mother Hajjah Jasmani, for their guidance since I began my study. I must apologise to them because I could not be in the *kampong* with them for more than 25 years. Thanks also go to my brother-in-law, Bang Adli Abdullah, who taught me how to survive in Aceh and took care of my family during my time in Melbourne.

Support and happiness from my families also came when I needed it. I am indebted for her full support to my wife Fitri Zulfidar, who played an important role in sharing a commitment to my study in Australia. During the writing process, I always took spirit from my children: Qatrin, Qaishar, Queen Zulaikha, Qyara, and Qinar.

I would also thank to anonymous reviewers of CSP for their report on the manuscript. Thanks also go to Samuel Baker and Amanda Miller for their assistance during the preparation of this project at CSP.

The author would like to thank the following for publishing some materials of the book: "From Islamic Revivalism to Islamic Radicalism in Southeast Asia: The Case of Malaysia," in Alistair D.B. Cook (ed.), *Culture, Identity and Religion in Southeast Asia*, (Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007):68-87. "The History of *Jamā'ah Tablīgh* in Southeast Asia: The Role of Islamic Sufism in the Islamic Revival", *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies*, Vol.46, No.2 (2008): 353-400. "Faith on the Move: Inside of the *Ijtima'* of Jama'ah Tabligh in Pekan Baru," *Studia Islamika: Indonesian Journal for Islamic Studies*, Vol.18, No.3 (2011): 463-496.

Last but not least, my thanks should go to Allāh for making all of this possible, from the beginning to the end of this study. He knows more than I have learned in this book.

Banda Aceh, 17 September 2014

KBA

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Photos, Figures, Tables and Diagrams ..... x

Glossary ..... xi

Acknowledgements ..... xiv

Chapter One ..... 1
Introduction
- Background of the Study
- Analysing Islamic Radicalism in Southeast Asia
- Terminological Issues
- Islam and the Social Sciences
- From a Sociology to a Phenomenology of Religious Experience
- Methodology
- Structure of Study

Chapter Two ..... 29
The History of Jamā'ah Tablīgh in Southeast Asia
- Introduction
- The emergence of Jamā'ah Tablīgh
- The coming of Jamā'ah Tablīgh to Malaysia
- The coming of Jamā'ah Tablīgh to Aceh
- Conclusion

Chapter Three ..... 57
The National *Markāż*
- Introduction
- The Sri Petaling *markāż*
- The setting
- Activities
- Conclusion

Chapter Four ..... 84
*Mushāwarah*
Introduction
Types of *Mushāwarah*
*Syor*: expressing an idea
*Jorh*: the regional meeting of *Karkūn*
Conclusion

Chapter Five ..... 105
*Ijtimā'*
Introduction
Preparation for departure to Pekan Baru
The departure
The setting
Conclusion

Chapter Six ..... 131
***Bayān***
Introduction
The process and types of *bayān*
*Bayān* and 'the Six Points' of Jamā'ah Tablīgh
*'Ilm* (knowledge) and *Żikir* (remembrance of Allāh)
*Ikrām al-Muslim* (respect for Muslims)
*Ikhlās niyyat* (sincerity of purpose)
*Da'wa* and *tablīgh*
Conclusion

Chapter Seven ..... 160
*Khurūj*
Introduction
The preparation for *Khurūj*
The activity
Conclusion

Chapter Eight ..... 191
Life Stories of *Karkūn*
Introduction
Experiences of the miraculous: the case of Apa Itanya
The bonds of Islamic brotherhood: the case of Pak De Paijo
Returning to Allāh: the case of Bang Ibrahim
Jamā'ah Tablīgh is about Islam: the case of Bang Rahman
Connected to the organisation: the case of Dynnyï
Conclusion

Conclusion ..... 219

Bibliography ..... 228

Index ..... 251

LEMBAGA KAJIAN & PENGEMBANGAN
SUMBER DAYA MANUSIA

# PENGURUS WILAYAH
# Nahdlatul Ulama
# PROVINSI ACEH

# CHAPTER ONE

# INTRODUCTION

## Background of the Study

This book presents an ethnographic study of the Jamā'ah Tablīgh[1] in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia and Banda Aceh, Indonesia. Jamā'ah Tablīgh (JT) is reputed to be the largest of the numerous movements and organisations dedicated to the revival, reform or revitalisation of Islam that emerged in the twentieth century. It was founded by a charismatic Indian *'alim* (religious scholar) Mawlana Ilyas (1855-1944), from his base in the Dar ul-'Ulum, a reformist Sufi *madrasah* (religious school) in Deoband near Delhi. From its base in India, Jamā'ah Tablīgh grew rapidly so that now it is active in "almost every country with a significant Sunni Muslim presence" (Sikand, 2007: 129).

Among the places to which Jamā'ah Tablīgh has spread and has had a great deal of success in attracting new members – initially from members of the South Asian Muslim diaspora and subsequently from among the majority population of ethnic Malays – is Malaysia. JT has also managed to establish a significant presence in neighbouring Indonesia, the country with the world's largest Muslim population.

It is often said that Islamic revivalism in Southeast Asia came from the Middle East and in recent years a number of studies of Islamic revivalism have stressed the connections between the two regions (Abu Bakar, 1991). Most such studies are particularly concerned with uncovering the roots of so-called Islamic radicalism in Southeast Asia by linking Islamic revivalism to the perceived growth of Islamic political agendas (based on the implementation of Islamic law and the establishment of an Islamic state), tracing these back to developments in Middle Eastern Islam.

My interest in studying Jamā'ah Tablīgh stemmed in part from my sense that, although it had perhaps become the largest movement for

---

[1] Jamā'ah Tablīgh is variously known as the "*jamā'ah*" (party), "*tahrīk*" (movement), "*nizām*" (system), "*tanzīm*" (organisation), "*tablīgh*" (missionary), and "*tahrik-i-imān* (faith movement).

Islamic revival in Malaysia, and attracts steadily increasing numbers of followers in Indonesia, it did not fit what was becoming the dominant model of a Southeast Asian Islamic movement, including its South Asian rather than Middle Eastern roots. This led me to a number of questions about the relationship between JT and the general understanding of Islamic organisations in the region. What are the sources of their views and beliefs, and who and what are the main influences on their ways of life? How do members see themselves as Muslims? To what extent do they identify themselves instead as members of a transnational Islamic community? What social networks have been formed among members of the Jamā'ah Tablīgh in Southeast Asia? In other words, how do they negotiate their transnational activities, such as travelling to preach Islam, while maintaining their group membership and family ties? And how are their families supported economically while they devote themselves to their religious activities?

There is quite large literature on Islamic revivalism and Islamic radicalism in Malaysia and Indonesia (Salleh, 1999: 39-64; Abu Bakar, 1980; Anwar, 1987, 2003; Baharuddin, 1983, 1998, 1999; Dobbin, 1974; Hafez, 1997; Mansurnoor, 1997, 2003; Eliraz, 2004; Lim, 2005; Thomas, 1988; Hamid, 2000; Azra, 2004; Jamhari, 2005; Sirozi, 2005; Effendy, 2004; Zada, 2002; Federspiel, 1999; and Crouch, 2005; Nagata, 1980, 1984, 1983, 2006; and Jomo and Shabery, 1992). Of these works, only a few deal peripherally with the role of Jamā'ah Tablīgh (Nagata, 1980 and Jomo and Shabery, 1992) while two focus almost exclusively on it: the first, by Abdul Rahman Haji Abdullah (1992), which compares JT with Darul Arqam,[2] and the second, by Abdul Aziz (2004), who studies the movement in Indonesia by looking at its nature and history in some certain provinces in Java.

Particularly important for my study is the book edited by Muhammad Khalid Masud (2000) which gives rich data on the nature of this movement, already transnationalised from its emergence in 1926. There are also some studies of JT which treat it as a fundamentalist, radical, Sufist, missionary and/or terrorist organisation (Ahmad, 1991; Rashid, 2006; Sikand, 2007; Reetz, 2003, 2005). My study therefore does not aim primarily to fill a gap in the literature. As we shall see, the case of Jamā'ah Tablīgh challenges this way of characterising Islamic movements. My aim in analysing this movement is similar to that of Charles Taylor, who sought to characterise the Reform Master Narrative (RMN) within

[2] On Darul Arqam, see Seng (2005, 2005b); Nagata (2004); Hamid (2004); Salleh (1994); and Hassan (2006). This movement was banned in 1994 in Malaysia; see an analysis in Meuluman (1996: 43–78).

Christianity. In Taylor's words: "Reform demanded that everyone be a *real, 100 percent* Christian. Reform not only disenchants, but disciplines and re-orders life and society. Along with civility, this makes for a nation of moral order which give a new sense to Christianity, and the demands of the faith" (Taylor, 2007: 774).

## Analysing Islamic Radicalism in Southeast Asia

As already noted, this study is a response to, among other things, much of the writing, particularly by non-Muslims, on Islamic radicalism or Islamic terrorism in Southeast Asia. Existing investigations have followed four main paths: first, there are those who investigate it in the context of internal conflicts – Indonesia and *Dārul Islām*, Malaysia and Islamic activism, and Thailand with its unresolved problems with Malay-Muslims in the south (see Serajul Islam, 2005). Second, there are studies that consider how the global panic has led to a change in the image of Islam in the region. During the 1980s, Muslims in Southeast Asia developed their own perspectives on what they had become, based on an interpretation of Islam influenced by the Iranian revolution in 1979 and the 1967 Arab-Israeli conflict (Jones, 1980, Anwar, 1987; Mansurnoor, 2003). In other words, some Muslim pioneers in the region looked to the Middle East for models of how to revive Islam in the region (see also Azra, 1994: Laffan, 2003, 2004; Feener, 2004, 2004b). Third, there are scholars who see Islamic movements as a replacement for communism in Western policy after the end of the Cold War (see for example Dreyfuss, 2005). Here, the tendency is to write about Islam and Muslims as representing a new enemy, without taking into account Muslim feeling after the Cold War (Huntington, 1997; see also Lewis 2002, 2003). This trend has led Muslims to shift their interpretation of Islam closer to what has been called "American-Islam". Finally, most studies of Islam argue that Muslims must change their way of life if they want to escape from being classified as fundamentalists, radicals, terrorists, and salafists (see for example Dijk, 2003).

Many such analyses of Islamic movements in Southeast Asia and elsewhere are marked by what is, in my view, as a high level of terminological confusion. A set of terms and concepts – including Islamic fundamentalism, Islamic radicalism, Islamic terrorism, Islamic state, Islamic law, Islamic secularism, *jihad*, Wahabism, Salafism – all purporting to describe some aspects of Islamic thought or practice, circulate widely in this literature. Yet in most cases these terms are not clearly defined, and/or they present a misleading picture of how these

terms are actually used in the core texts of the Islamic studies, in the work of generations of Muslim scholars and by most Muslims, at least in Southeast Asia.

## Fundamentalism and radicalism

Take for example the concept of Islamic fundamentalism, particularly as used by Western observers. Many argue that *fundamentalism* means a return to the original texts of Islam, the Qur'an and Sunnah, that impliy an archaism and textual/scriptural literalism that is characteristic of some Islamic practice and not others, and that there is moreover a close connection between fundamentalism in this sense and Islamic radicalism (Bruinessen, 1996). But is the widespread call for a "return" to the original Islamic texts really a form of archaism and scriptural literalism in the same sense as it is in Christianity? Is it true in only some forms of Islam and not others? And is there, as it is so often assumed, particularly in the west, therefore a causal connection between a so-called fundamentalist approach to the sources of Islam and political radicalism, even terrorism? After all, there is a sense in which all Muslims are "fundamentalists" in that they advocate a "return" to the original sources of their religion. Yet not all "fundamentalists" are political radicals, much less terrorists. Nor are all radicals theologically fundamentalist. This suggests that there is a great deal of confusion in the literature about this key concept.

In Islamic studies, returning to *al-Qur'ān* is called *ushūliyyah,* which means to go to the foundations of Islam. As Khaled Aboud El Fadl points out:

> Although many have used the label *fundamentalist*, it is clearly problematic. *All* Islamic groups and organizations claim to adhere to the fundamentals of Islam. Even the most liberal movement will insist that its ideas and convictions better represent the fundamentals of the faith. In the Western context, using the term *fundamentalist* to describe extremist Christian groups that insist on the literal meaning of scripture, regardless of the historical context of a text, appears to be quite reasonable. But as many Muslim researchers have noted, the term *fundamentalist* is ill-fitted for the Islamic context because in Arabic the word become *us[h]ūli*, which means "one who relies on the fundamentals or basics." So the expression *Islamic fundamentalism* conveys the unavoidable misimpression that only fundamentalists base their interpretations on *al-Qur'ān* and the traditions of the Prophet - the basic of fundamental sources of Islamic theology and law (El-Fadl, 2005: 18-19).

There is a related debate over the potential compatibility or incompatibility of Islam and secularism (see, for example, An-Naim, 2007). Here it has been argued that in the Islamic tradition, fundamentalism and secularism may go together, while in the Western tradition the two are strongly opposed. It is therefore widely and mistakenly assumed that fundamentalism leads necessarily to extremism and that "hard–line" Islamic movements must be treated with suspicion. In Islam, a person who wants to submit himself to Allāh must begin with *imān* (belief or faith). Anyone who intends to become a Muslim should be from the outset believe that Allāh is his creator. This belief incorporates elements of mind and soul. To become a Muslim is to observe the five pillars (*shahādat,* prayer, fasting, alms, pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina), and to embed them in one's religious experience. My study aimed at finding out how believers strengthen their beliefs before submitting themselves to Allāh. Can we say that anyone who wants to seek a way to Allah is a fundamentalist and hence also a radical? To what extent do we need to understand the inner world of *Muslim*s (people who submit themselves to be "slaves of Allāh" and to witness that Muhammad is His Prophet) and *Mukmin* (believers)?

## *Salafism and Wahabism*

A common theory of the rise of modern Islamic movements is that they are mainly influenced by pioneering Islamic thinkers like Muhammad Abd Wahab (1703-92), the founder of what is usually called the Wahabi or Salafi movement in Saudi Arabia. This movement in turn has been linked to the discourse of Ibn Taymiyyah (1263-1328),[3] which has in turn been connected back to the thought of Imām Ahmad Ibn Hanbal (780-855), one

[3] For a biography of Ibn Taimiyyah, see Suma, 2002. His full name was Ahmad ibn 'Abd al-Halim ibn 'Abd al-Salām ibn Taimiyyah. He was imprisoned for his beliefs. Peters writes that "his approach towards religion and law was fundamentalist, in the sense that he emphasized the example of the pious ancestors (*al-salāf al-ṣhālih*) as the highest authority" (Peters, 1996: 43). However, in his biography, Peters (1996:43) noted that "Ibn Taimiyyah mastered several Islamic areas of knowledge such as *tafsīr*, *muhaddist* (the expert on the tradition of the Prophet), *ushūl al-fiqh* (Islamic legal theory), and that he was also the author of several books. The only way to link him to Ibn Hanbal is through his teacher Syams al-Dīn 'Abd Rahmān ibn Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Maqdisi (597-682) who was the first of Judge during the reign of Sultan Baybars (1260-77). See also Khan (1983); Hallaq (1993).

of the legal theorists in the Sunni tradition.[4] His thought was a response to those Muslims who sought an understanding of Islam through reason, not revelation (the Qur'anic texts), an approach promoted by *Mu'tazilah*.

Many analysts argue that contemporary Islamic terrorism or *jihadism* is part of Wahabism or Salafism (Al-Rasheed, 2008: 8-9). [5] As Sela has observed:

> The writings of Ibn Hanbal and Ibn Taymiyya had a great influence on the Islamic radical movements, especially on the Wahhabiyya Movement (1703-1878), named after the founder and leader of this movement, Muhammad Abdel Wahhab, who denounced the religious practices prevalent in the Ottoman Empire and succeeded in spreading his interpretation of the *Qur'ān* and the *Hadīth*. Like Ibn Hanbal and Ibn Taymiyya, Abdel Wahhab called for a return to original sources of Islam, and combined with the political power of Ibn Saud in Najd, brought large parts of the Arabian Peninsula, including Mecca and Medina, under the domination of the Wahhabi concept of Islam (Sela, 2002: 434).

In this view, the historical links between Ibn Hanbal, Ibn Taymiyyah and Abdul Wahhab constitute the roots of Islamic fundamentalism, Salafism or Wahhabism which subsequently led to Islamic radicalism.[6]

However, is it really possible to link the thought of Ibn Hanbal in the 9th century to Ibn Taimiyyah who lived in the 13th century, to Abdul Wahhab who was the pioneer of Salafism in 18th century? Each of these thinkers had his own interpretation of Islam, located in his own era, such as Ibn Hanbal who was a legal thinker who promoted *al-Qur'an* and Sunnah against the rationalisation promoted by Mu'tazilah (see Hourani 1976: 59-87).

---

[4] On the impact of this thought in Islamic history see Arnell (1998: 78-86). Ibn Hanbal, besides being a jurist was also a sufist. He was jailed for opposing the ruler who advocated Mu'tazilah. He was moved from jail to jail because he did not agree that al-Qur'an was *makhlūk* (a creation) (see this in Haque, 1992: 95-112).

[5] For a brief discussion of the definition of *terrorism*, see Schmid (2004: 404), who lists the key elements of terrorism as: (1) the demonstrative use of violence against human being; (2) the (conditional) threat of (more) violence; (3) the deliberate production of terror/fear in a target group; (4) the targeting of civilians, non-combatants and innocents; (5) the purpose of intimidation, coercion and or propaganda; (6) the fact that it is a method, tactic or strategy for waging conflict; (7) the importance of communicating the act(s) to larger audiences; (8) the illegal, criminal and immoral nature of the act(s) of violence; (9) its predominantly political character; (10) its use as a tool of psychological warfare to mobilise or immobilise sectors of the public.

[6] See also Ali (2002).

## *Jihād*

Another problem in such analyses is the understanding of the notion of *jihād*. The term *jihād* comes from the word of *jahada* which means to endeavour, strive, labour, take pains over, to overwork, overtax, fatigue and exhaust something (Wehr, 1976: 142). Some, especially Western, scholars have understood the term to mean holy war against infidels (Cook, 2005), thereby making it the root of radicalism (Abuza, 2004). However, the term *jihād* is also found in the discourse of knowledge and *tashawwuf* (Vikor, 2000). It is not always linked to holy war or terrorism (Peter, 1996). Sa'īd Hawwa in his *Jund Allāh* (soldier of Allah) (n.d.) classifies *jihād* into five categories: *al-jihād bi al-lisān* (*jihād* with conversation); *al-jihād al-ta'limī* (*jihād* with science or knowledge); *al-jihād bi al-yad wa nafs* (*jihād* with hand (power) and soul); *al-jihād al-siyāsī* (*jihad* with diplomatic power); *al-jihād al-māl* (*jihād* with economic power).

In *al-Qur'ān*, *jihād* has different meanings in different contexts, (see al-'Āqīl, 1993: 325-238). But the most appropriate translation is how to implement justice and control desire or temptation. It is narrated that the Prophet, after coming back from a war, said to his *sahabat*: "we just returned from the small *jihād*, now we are in the beginning a big *jihād* that is fasting". In this sense, for Muslims, holy war is not a "*big jihād*" since it refers only to the fight against infidels who commit acts of violence against Muslims in Muslim regions (Al-Baqarah (2); 190-4). On the other hand a big *jihād* (*jihād al-akbar*) refers mainly to the control of the soul and heart. However, most Muslims appear to be concerned only with "small *jihād*" while the "big *jihād*" is almost never taken into account.

Carrying out an ethnographic study of Jamā'ah Tablīgh in two countries provides us with better understanding of what a "return" to *al-Qur'an* and Sunnah means to practicing Muslims and the socio-political implications of such a return. This study investigates Islamic religious experiences among Jamā'ah Tablīgh members, in the process of overcoming some of the terminological confusion that plagues much contemporary analysis of Islam, fundamentalism, radicalism and terrorism.

As I demonstrate in the following chapters, Jamā'ah Tablīgh can be seen as "fundamentalist" and "radical" in the sense that its founder and members want to return to the original texts of Islam. However, this aim is pursued without violence, through a form of *jihād* that we can understand as closest to that of *al-jihād bi al-lisān* (*jihād* with conversation) and *al-jihād al-ta'limī* (*jihād* with science or knowledge). The central points of this are the efforts of the movement to base itself on the experiences of the Prophet Muhammad in Medina and in particular the utilisation of the

mosque as the centre of all Tablighist activities (discussed in Chapters 2, 3 and 4). This can be seen as part of a desire to re-establish an Islamic caliphate. Yet the absence of violence or even aspiration to form of state power suggests once again the need to define our terminology clearly when describing Islamic movements.

## Islam and the Social Sciences

Modern social sciences are themselves embedded in mainly Western, post-Christian or secular traditions of thought and analysis that have their origins in the Protestant reformation, the European Renaissance and the so-called European Enlightenment (see for example Asad, 2003, Taylor, 2007), creates particular problems for the analysis of Islamic reformism, as well as other non-western religious and philosophical traditions. When Islamic reformism emerged, especially in the Middle East and Southeast Asia, the social sciences had begun their own ways of theorising and understanding social life. As Binder has argued, this has involved a continuous attempt to apply rational discourse to all dimensions of human life, include religion (Binder, 1988). Julia Day Howell and Martin van Bruinessen maintain:

> The social sciences for most of the twentieth century have been dominated by modernization theories by proliferating what Max Weber called "rational" social forms. The rational-critical thought necessary to support the proper functioning of modern firms and other bureaucratic institutions, so the argument goes, would render religion less and less plausible and attractive (Howell and Bruinessen, 2007: 5).

In the early 1900s Muslim pioneers seeking to revive Muslim society were influenced by these modes of thinking, adopting Weberian and Marxist ideas in an attempt to "apply rational discourse" (Mulyadi, 2006, 2005) to their own societies. Many of them spent time in the West or at least studied the Western social sciences and then came back to their own societies to "return to *al-Qur'an* and Sunnah". Sayyid Qutb, the founder of *Ikhwān Muslim* (Muslim Brotherhood) went to the United States to study social sciences (Khatab, 2004; Haddad, 1983; Shepard, 1992). While the West had its "Martin Luther" and "Protestantism", Islam had "Islamic Lutheranism" and "Islamic Protestantism". Sayyid Qutb promoted Islamic revivalism for the Muslim world, which involved building the Islamic community, struggling for an Islamic state, moving away from a system based on ignorance and promoting *jihād*. Most contemporary Islamic movements, if not all, use this basic approach to revive the Islamic

community (*ummah*) by their use of the linking term *Jamā'ah* (group or "caravan"), as in Jamā'ah Tablīgh, Jamā'ah al-Islāmiyyah, Jamā'ah Dārul Arqām, Jamā'ah Islāmi (an Islamic party in Pakistan) and Jam'iyat al-Subhān al-Muslimin (Dekmejian, 1985; Marty and Appbleby, 1991).

Many problems, however, are generated by any attempt to marry Islam with the insights of the modern social sciences, with their Christian, secular or Western presuppositions. This is evident in those attempts described above to understand Islamic fundamentalism or Islamic extremism by beginning with the conceptual framework of the Western social sciences, which results in claims that fundamentalism leads necessarily to extremism and that "hard-line" Islamic movements must be treated with suspicion (see Jamhari, 2005, 2003).

As noted above, the relationship between so-called fundamentalism and secularism in Islam is quite different from that in post-Christian thought. For the Mawlana Ilyās, founder of Jamā'ah Tablīgh, returning to *al-Qur'ān* and Sunnah means to go back to the "Islamic fundamentals". However, for Mawalana Ilyās and other Muslim reformers, going back to *al-Qur'ān* and Sunnah meant to be "secularist," and therefore to become "globalist" and "internationalist". This is because Jamā'ah Tablīgh aimed to be "cosmopolitan" in the same way that Christendom was, i.e. through spreading religion through missionary activity (*da'wa*) to all of humankind. April Carter writes:

> Early Christianity had emphasized *human equality*, often finding converts among *slaves* and women and *ignoring ethnic* or *political distinctions*. Moreover, Christian beliefs and the idea of a universal Church provided a basis for asserting the potential worth of *all human beings* and *cosmopolitan of the world* (Carter, 2001: 14). (Italics mine).

Hodgson uses the term *Islamdom* to describe the Islamic equivalent:

> The term "Islamdom" will be immediately intelligible by analogy with "Christendom". "'Islamdom", then, is the society in which the Muslims and their faith are recognized as prevalent and socially dominant, in one sense or another – a society in which, as have Jews in Christendom. It does not refer to an area as such, but to *a complex of social relations*, which, to be sure, is a juridical and territorial term, "Dār al-Islām": yet, in contrast to "Muslim lands" it is clearly collective – frequently an important point (Hodgson, 1974: 29).

Thus one can describe Jamā'ah Tablīgh as a "society that carries the spirit of religion" which is called "Islamdom". This movement seeks to provide a path towards God through its teachings. In this way, JT is linked

to a basic foundation of Islamic and Christian thought – that Islamic and Christian teachings provide a path to God. Schimmel writes that "The Christian tripartite division of the *via purgativa*, the *via contemplative*, and the *via illuminative* is, to some extent, the same as the Islamic definitions of *sharī'ah*, *ṭharīqah*, and *haqīqah*' (Schimmel, 1975: 98).

It might be assumed that anthropology has been immune from these problems of the "contamination" of social scientific discourse by Western assumptions, since anthropology adopts a method assumed to provide more or less unmediated access to the meanings and cultural values of its objects, i.e. people in "other" cultures and societies. To this claim I would respond that the anthropological goal of eliminating ethnocentrism on the part of the Western ethnographer, while an important effort, is nonetheless illusory. Ethnographic writing is still structured to meet the requirements of "proper" anthropological knowledge-making, which are in turn derived from the same "rationalistic" traditions that underpin all forms of western discourse. This is an argument that has been made fairly convincingly within the discipline itself over the last couple of decades (see Clifford and Marcus, 1986; Marcus and Fisher, 1986; Kahn, 1985). The example of Clifford Geertz, the best known anthropological analyst of religion in Indonesia, is a case in point. Although a strong advocate of placing the cultural meanings of his "informants" at the centre of his analysis, Geertz never claimed that his own writings amounted to anything but anthropological accounts, not unmediated descriptions or translations of the meaning systems of others.[7] Moreover, it is quite clear that Geertz's doctoral research was designed to test Weber's theories of religious rationalisation in an Islamic context, which explains the pervasive use of Weberian concepts, terms and presuppositions in Geertz's own ethnographic reporting. Geertz writes about his own understanding of Islam as follows:

> The multiple legal interpretations of the Koran and the Hadith finally crystallized into four orthodox schools, all considered equally *valid and sacred*. After the second and third Islamic centuries, no further extension of the law was permitted; the "gate of ijtihād" (individual interpretation of the Koran and Hadīth) swung shut, and henceforth *no scholar*, however eminent, could qualify as an authoritative lawmaker. The body of orthodox Islam (called Sunnite Islam after the Arabic *sunna*, "custom"), made up of

[7] See various discussions of anthropological "interpretation" in Geertz (1975). See also Kahn, (1989).

> the contents of the Koran, the Hadīth, and the *sharī'a*, has been fixed since the tenth century (Geertz, 1960: 122).[8]

This study offers a social scientific interpretation of a particular Islamic organisation, Jamā'ah Tablīgh. It does so in full recognition of the tensions between the knowledge produced by the modern social sciences and that generated within Islam. In this study, I not only provide ethnographic interpretations of the subjectivities of Jamā'ah Tablīgh members, but also use supporting knowledge provided by Islamic scholarship. This combining of social sciences and Islamic scholarship is one of the objectives of this study.

There are some anthropological studies on Islamic movements and the processes through which Muslims seek to become closer to God. Pnina Werbner (2003), for example, describes religious experiences among Sufist group. She views Sufism as a transnational religious movement and has never respected national boundaries. In her words, "these various forms of transnational movement through which space is deterritorialised and reterritorialised" (Werbner, 2003: 5). In recent years, there have been studies on Islamic transnationalism which not only focus on Islamic movements (Mandaville, 2001; Allevi and Nielsen, 2003), but also Islamic education such as the role of *madrasah* in South Asia and Southeast Asia (Noor, Sikand, and Bruinessen, 2008).

Furthermore, Jason's (2009) study of young Gambian conversion to Jamā'ah Tablīgh tells another story of how Muslims desire to become closer to God. In his study, Jason maintains:

> In the case of the Tabligh Jama'at the emphasis is less about pragmatic gain than a spiritual experience of closeness to God. By converting to the Tablighi ideology, Gambian youth ... reach a higher level of piety that draws them closer to God. It appeared that conversion represents a new expression of religiosity for them, in which the emphasis is on personal piety and moral reform (Jason, 2009: 155).

---

[8] This is his doctoral thesis at the Department of Social Relations at Harvard University in 1956. This work, according to Geertz, intended as "the realization of [the] aspiration to build strong, stable, prosperous and democratic "New Indonesia." (p. x). See also Geertz (1985: 271-7). His work, especially *The Religion of Java,* has been criticised by many scholars such as Hodgson (1974), Steenbrink (1984), Bachtiar (1985) and Lukens-Bull (2005). However, when I found his testimony about his knowledge of Islam, it is unlikely that he learned Islam prior his departure to Indonesia in 1950. What Geertz did was to test the Weberian concept (modernist or reformist) in Java as Weber did with Calvinism in Christianity. See Geertz (2002: 1-19); Handler (1991: 603-13).

Seen from this perspective, it seems that anthropological studies can tell us something about the situation of religious experience among Muslim followers, especially the process of "meeting" with God. The works of Werbner (2003) and Jason (2009) provide a portrait of how anthropology approaches the study of Muslim society. However, Lukens-Bull argues that:

> I would like to suggest that an anthropological definition of Islam begin at the same point that a Muslim definition of Islam does. This is not an unusual proposition; many have proposed such a starting point. However, I would like to start with the Islamic definition of "Islam" as submission to God. All Muslims will agree with this definition. Where they differ is in defining *how* one should go about submitting to God. A comparative study of the different conceptions of how to submit to God (that is, how to be a Muslim) should be the central task of an anthropology of Islam (Lukens-Bull, 1999: 17).

Thus, in this study we will employ an "anthropology of Islam", which is oriented to comprehending how Tablighists submit their selves to Allah. The study will therefore focus on the processes of becoming and being *karkun* and the level of religious awareness among them. In this context, Jason's study investigates the processes of being "born again in Islam" and the social circumstances of their re-commitment to being a good Muslim. In Islam, one way to be a good Muslim is Sufism. This is because during the process of meeting God, some Muslims face many spiritual experiences, which are named as *shatiyat* (words of ecstasy) (Ernst, 1997, 1994). Thus, it is not mistaken when John O. Voll says that "there is little recognition that while membership in the militant groups maybe in the thousands, there are many millions of Muslim who are not fundamentalists, who are active participants in Sufi *tariqa*s around the world" (Voll, 2007: 283). What this tells us is we need to pay more attention to the majority of Muslims, who are involved in drawing closer to God, either as a member of a group or an individual basis, than to "fundamentalists", who are not in the highest level of religious awareness. In the next section, I will describe where the religious experiences belong to fundamentalist and Sufism.

Now, let me turn to how anthropologists study Muslim society. Fred Inglis in his *Clifford Geertz* argues that " sociology busied itself with the study of humankind in the wealthy nations but ...among their poorer members, while anthropology with ethnography as it core practice, populated its books with more remote peoples, at that time permissibly, even honorifically known as 'primitive' or 'savages (Inglis, 2000: 35). Thus, the main task of anthropology was to understand the way of life

people in remote areas. However, in recent decades anthropological studies have now turned to urban areas (Thompson, 2007). Anthropologists such as Asad (1979, 1983, 2003) have also contributed greatly to the study of religion and Muslim society (Asad, 1979, 1983, 2003).

However, in the context of understanding the way of life of Muslim society, there is still some debate over anthropology's contribution. In commenting on several approaches to studying Islam amongst social scientist, Fazlur Rahman a leading Islamic scholar from Chicago University, writes: "an intellectual understanding and appreciation of Islam is quite possible for a non-Muslim who is unprejudiced, sensitive, and knowledgeable" (Rahman, 1985: 197). However, Varisco argues that "the majority of anthropologists who have worked with Muslim probably have not read the entire Qur'an, certainly not in Arabic" (Varisco, 2005: 152). In contrast, when Muslim scholars started to study Islam, they would first understand and familiarise themselves with the Qur'an. That is why anthropologists, unlike Muslim scholars, are likely to understand "Islam as is it actually lived" without taking into account several primary texts in Islamic theology that are: the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Varisco mentions other crucial problems with anthropology on "how to apply what is said in texts [Qur'an] to the context of use or allusion" (Varisco, 2005: 152). Varisco is concerned that primary texts should be a starting point for anthropologists studying Islam. Joseph Schacht goes even further to argue that "Islamic law is the epitome of Islamic thought, the most typical manifestation of the Islamic way of life, the core and kernel of Islam itself" (Schacht, 1996: 1).

Thus, anthropologists need to understand the historical root of Islamic thought not only in primary resources (Qur'an and Sunnah), but also in Islamic law and Islamic theology. In this study, I find that I cannot step outside an "Islamic way of life," which means that I seek to understand the Islamic content and import of the many concepts and philosophies embedded in the social life of Jamā'ah Tablīgh. These concepts and philosophies, beliefs and values comprise a body of knowledge in Islam which support us to comprehend or understand Muslim society. When I read the works of anthropologists I am positioned not as an anthropologist, but as a Muslim student who desires to understand his own community of faith. My understanding of the background concepts is derived from my education in Islamic studies. Primarily, I draw on this body of knowledge not in an anthropological way but in order to increase my belief in Allah and to be closer to Him. When researchers who are not Muslim study Muslim community, some of the people of this community would engage

with the researcher in the hope that through learning about Islam, the researcher will become Muslim. Pnina Werbner makes this clear in her final analysis of a transnational Sufist group she studied: "the great disappointment of cult members was that they failed to convert me to Islam, despite my evident admiration for the saint and fascination with Sufism as a ritual and religious system" (Werbner, 2003: 302).

Werbner's position and my position as research are different. This difference of perspective is between that of learning in order to be "born again in Islam" (Jason, 2009) and that of "convert[ing] to Islam" (Werbner, 2003). During my field work, many *karkun* spent their time with me in order to attract me to become a member of Jamā'ah Tablīgh. As a Muslim student, I can understand the historical root and Islamic references behind these attempts. As a non-Muslim, it is likely that I could have the same experience as Werbner, where some of her respondent rejected the draft before it went to the publisher (Werbner, 2003: 293-4). When I was in the field, some of my Acehnese-Muslim fellows would "smile" when they met non-Muslim researcher, saying "they will write about us through their understanding, not through our understanding." This is parallel with the statement of Varisco:

> Anthropology can only explore what is means to be Muslim against a shared humanity revealed by the always tentative, but not easily ignored findings of modern science and challenging reflections of critical philosophy. Beyond that, in the realm where ideology and theology reign supreme, anthropology has little to contribute. Studying what Muslims believe or fail to believe may say something about human nature, but it offers no window into the truth of revelation. The anthropologists observes Muslim in order to represent their representation; only Muslim can observe Islam (Varisco, 2005: 162).

## From a Sociology to a Phenomenology of Religious Experience

The main aim of my research is to enquire into the nature of religious experience among the members of a particular religious movement or organisation. By conducting ethnography among members of a single Islamic movement in different social settings (Kuala Lumpur and Aceh), the project examined the relationship between "what Muslims think and experience" and "what they do". I therefore chose to describe certain Islamic concepts and activities among *Jamā'ah Tablīgh* members (*markāż, mushāwarah, ijtimā', bayān,* and *khurūj*) and attempt to show how these form their religious experiences.

But how can we understand religious experience? Many sociologists would agree with the definition of religion "as [a] cultural system of commonly shared beliefs and rituals that provides a sense of ultimate meaning and purpose by creating an idea of reality that is sacred, all-encompassing and supernatural" (Giddens, 2006: 535). Giddens continues: "when sociologists study religion, they do so as sociologists and not as believers (or disbelievers) in any particular faith" (ibid: 535). Faith and religious experiences must be seen as part of "the reality of world" (*haqīqah muthlaqah*), not as a combination of *haqīqah muqayyadah* and *haqīqah ahadiyyah*. This is the approach, for example, that Syed Naquib al-Attas takes, quoting a Sufist author by the name Jami'īn, who classifies reality (*haqīqah*) into three interrelated levels:

> (1) Absolute reality (*haqīqah muthlaqah*). This is characterised as efficacious (*fa''ālah*), one or single (*wahīdah*), exalted in degree (*'āliyah*), necessary (*wājibah*) and existing by its own essence. This is the reality of God. (2) Determined reality (*haqīqah muqayyadah*). Characterised as passive (*munfa'ilah*), lowly in degree (*sāfilah*), being a recipient of existence, which it receives from the necessary reality by means of effusion or emanation (*al-faydh*) and manifestation (*al-tajallī*). This is the reality of world. (3) Unitive reality (*haqīqah ahadiyyah*). This reality is a combination of the absolute and determined realities; of activity (*al-fi'l*) and passivity (*al-infi'āl*), being effective (*al-ta'thīr*) and being effected (*al-ta'aththur*); it is absolute in one aspect, passive in another; it is a composite of the two realities and contains within itself the corresponding opposites inherent it its two aspects, by whose mutual operation it becomes multiple (*muta'addid*) and particularised (*mufashshal*). As to what of this reality is externalised: it is the universal active nature (*al-thabī'ah al-kulliyah al-fa''ālah*) in one aspect, and the universal passive nature (*al-thabī'ah al-kulliyah al-munfa'ilah*) in another. It receives its effects from the Divine Names (*al-asmā' al-ilāhiyyah*) in conformity with the mutual operation of corresponding opposites inherent in them. To this reality refers the plane of first-ness and last-ness. The active and unifying principle of all the realities as combined in this reality is the Reality of realities (*haqīqah al-haqā'iq*) (Al-Attas, 1986: 342-3)

Sociology on the other hand sees religion as only part of the daily lives of human beings and not as an integrated system of life. Giddens (2006: 535) writes of the consequences of this distance: "sociologists are not concerned with whether religious beliefs are true or false; sociology is especially concerned with the social organization of religion; and sociologists often view religions as a major source of social solidarity". In Giddens' words, "sociologists tend to explain the appeal of religion in

terms of social forces rather than in terms of purely personal, spiritual or psychological factors" (ibid: 536).

Bowen (2004: 18) says that "studies of religion inspired by Marx have looked for the material interest served by movements gathered together under the banner of religion". Durkheim's legacy in the field of religious studies was twofold: first he connected the religions to the social, leading anthropologists to look for the social origins or functions of specific religious practices and ideas; second, he connected religion to the intellectual, continuing E.B. Tylor's emphasis. Weber wrote that one can only come to understand social action by first discovering the meaning of action for the individual, and secondly, explaining it in terms the social conditions and action that preceded it (Bowen, 2004: 19).

However, none of these social thinkers examined how the meaning of religious experiences is produced and transformed among religious followers. Instead, they mostly looked at the impact of religious beliefs on the social. That is why most sociologists and anthropologists establish a distance between why and how someone becomes religious, and the impact of religious belief on individuals and members of social groups. It can be said that the job of a sociology of religion is only to analyse the level of *sharī'ah*, not *'aqīdah* and *haqīqah*. This is because *sharī'ah* tends to be focussed on the world of reality, not the world of God or the combination of the two worlds.

There are thus at least two dimensions of religious experience in Islam that a sociology or anthropology of religion must confront. The first is the problem of *dhāhir* (exoteric) which is *sharī'ah*-oriented and the second a matter of *bāthin* (esoteric), which is more concerned with the mystical life (Sufi).

While sociology and anthropology may be able to help us analyse the former, it leaves us with the problem of how to understand the latter, i.e. the phenomenon of religious experience from the inside. One theoretical innovation here has been to apply a phenomenological approach. Knibbe and Versteeg (2008: 48) tell us that:

> What attracted us to phenomenology in the first place was the aim of avoiding reductionism and of doing justice to the voice of believers. However, when we deepened our knowledge of the philosophical background of phenomenology, we encountered some serious limitations of its method and aims, which seemed to be just as reductionist toward religious experience as the approaches we criticized, albeit in a different way.

Jackson (1996: 2) further writes about this approach as "an attempt to describe human consciousness in its lived immediacy before it is subject to theoretical elaboration or conceptual systematizing". Daniélou (1959: 78) also noted that "the phenomenology of religion has as its basis a description which respects the data and their peculiar intentionality".

It is productive therefore to apply phenomenology to the case of Islam, particularly if it enables us to examine religious experiences as a phenomena of human consciousness.[9] About this approach, Schimmel (1994: xii) writes: "I believe that the phenomenological approach is well suited to a better understanding Islam...to enter into the heart of religion by studying first phenomena and then deeper and deeper layers of human responses to the Divine until he reaches the innermost sacred of each religion, the centre". Joachim Wach, the Protestant theologian, defines religious experience as follows:

> [R]eligious experience as a response to what is experienced as Ultimate Reality ... involves four things. The first is the assumption that there are degrees of awareness, such as apprehension, conception, and so on...Second, the response is considered as part of an encounter...Third, the "experiencing" of supreme reality implies a dynamic relationship between the experiences and the experienced ... Finally, we have to understand the situational character of religious experience, that is, we must conceive of it in its particular context. (1958: 31)

As this quote suggests, there is a close relationship between an experience deemed religious and its description or analysis. In other words, in order for me to achieve my analytical goal – to access and then provide an account of "what it is like to believe" from the point of view of an experiencing subject – I must also understand that "there are degrees of [my own] awareness" of the consciousness of my object; that my work as an analyst is "part of an encounter" and that it therefore "implies a dynamic relationship between the experiencer [myself] and the experienced [the subjectivity of my 'informant]" and that my own relationship with my research subjects must be conceived "in its particular context". Ultimately, the phenomenologist has reference to his/her own understandings of ultimate reality (Kahn, nd, np).

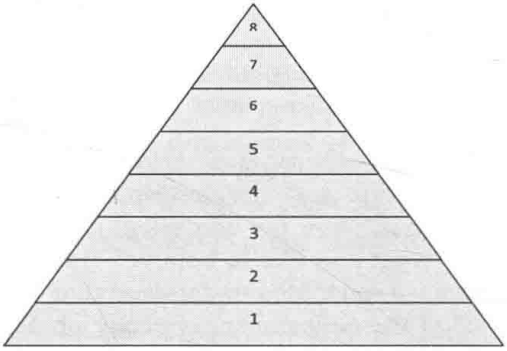
What is therefore called for here is a phenomenological methodology more directly connected to the ways in which my research subjects experience their "ultimate reality", that is, a methodology that originates in the Islamic rather than the Western tradition. For this reason my analysis

[9] See also Kojeve (1969).

of the religious experience of JT members is based on what in my view is the Islamic "version" of Western phenomenology, that is to approach religious experience based on the one tradition in Islamic philosophy that has been and remains most concerned with uncovering the workings of human consciousness, particularly in the context of religious experience. I am referring here to the Sufi tradition which has in different ways been concerned to develop what might be called an Islamic philosophy of mind. Certain key aspects of Sufism understood as philosophical and methodological therefore inform the analyses of religious experience offered in subsequent chapters.

From the perspective of Sufism, human consciousness can be understood as existing at a number of different levels which correspond to different levels of religious awareness and or what might be called "human being" understood in the ontological sense. These levels are depicted in the following diagram.

Figure 1: The levels of human consciousness:




1 Human as animal
2 Human as animal with reason
3 Human as animal with reason and belief
4 Human as animal who worships his creator
5 Human as animal of good behaviour
6 Human as animal becoming human
7 Human as human who humanised humanity
8 The perfect man (*insān kāmil*)

This diagram describes the different levels of human being or consciousness. The pyramid represents different levels of awareness: the

highest level refers to gnosis and Sufist cosmologies. "Animal" here is a metaphor for a human consciousness that does not employ its heart, eyes and ears according to the aims of human beings on the earth. Allah said: *wa laqad dzara'nā katsīrān min al-jinn wa al-ins lahum qulūbun lā yafqahūn bihā wa lahum 'a'yun lā yubshirūna bihā wa lahum 'adzān lā yasma'ūna bihā ulā'ika kal'an'ām bal hum adhal ulā'ika humum al-ghāfilūn* (Many are the Jinns and men we have made for hell: They have hearts wherewith they understand not, eyes wherewith they see not, and ears wherewith they hear not. They are like – nay more misguided: for they are heedless (of warning) (al-A'rāf (7): 179).

Schimmel says of this verse that "the Sufist frequently regarded the common people as something like animals (*ka'l-an'ām*)" relying upon Koranic statement like in Shūrah (al-A'rāf (7): 179) about those who do not hear or see the signs of divine power and grace. Only true "man" can experience the vision of God through and behind His creation" (Schimmel, 1975: 282). Moreover, in Islamic logic, man is also considered an animal with reason (*al-nas hayawan nāthiq*) (Ibrahimī, 1937: 7). Thus, according to Sufi philosophy, human consciousness at levels one and two is of the kind that anthropology used to call primitive.[10] At this level of human awareness, religious experience does not involve a belief in God, but is rather involved in a search for a power in nature which determines what is "good" and "bad" for the religious community.

At level three humans find their own interpretation of God according to their social circumstances. Magic is used to control the relationship between humans and nature. Thus, the exercise of reason leads to a belief in the supernatural. The attitude associated with levels one and two is still there, especially when the head of community has magic powers as a manifestation of "their God".

These first three levels are, therefore, do not present among "primitive", "uncivilised" and "illiterate" peoples only. However, when we reach level four, humans define their God in their minds according to the reproduction and regeneration of their understanding. At this level, the target of worship is "defined" and becomes "closer to God", and more complicated rituals must be performed in order to get a clear "definition". The "holy man" acts as a transformer of magic power through ritual and thus differs from ordinary people.

Magic is then transformed into prayer and regulated for those at level three. At this stage, it can be said that religious awareness is produced and inherited. Thus, charisma and authority are parts of the way of being a

[10] See also Dozier (1995: 187-202).

religious person. Rationality is not the main issue here because religion is already embedded in the minds and souls of people and must be rationalised by "holy men" in the community. Their charisma and authority may be questioned. It is not perfect religion in the sense that the ritual process is still fragile. Believers still require mediation and a mediator to be able to worship their God. God must be seen or made as an idol. Certain rules were made by the "founder" of religion. God may be worshipped at home or in special places such as temples. At this level, God can be everywhere and may take any form. But the main objective of this process is to gain spiritual power through religious men who have authority and power.

Religious experience at levels three and four may be described as a process of *islām* (submission), thereby making its practitioners Muslims. When greeting a fellow Muslim, a believer will say *assalāmu 'alaykum* (peace upon you), indicating that he who wants to embrace *islām* must have peace in his mind. This is achieved by practising morality.

In these social circumstances, religion is produced and regenerated in the minds of the believer. That is why they may still be called animals, not humans. They will do everything to maintain correct behaviour. Needless to say, violence and hatred may also occur, in which case a Muslim might be said to have descended to a lower level of religious awareness. Because at this level religion is a social product that is reproduced from one generation to another - children take on the religion of their parents, social custom acts to transmit religious truth to each successive generation, etc. - this form of religious practice may be analysed in social scientific terms.

However, here we reach the limit of the social and hence of our ability to analyse religious experience from the outside, as it were. Henceforth, from level six upwards, religion and religious experience can only be understood as products of the "active intelligence" of a Holy Spirit, Angel of Knowledge and/or Revelation (Corbin, 1969). In the Islamic tradition, it is said that a human who knows "the self" *in* himself, in fact knows "his God" (*man 'arafa nafsahu, faqad 'arafa rabbahu*). If level five is the last destination of the spiritual journey of humans as animals, then at level six a person produces his own understanding of the path to becoming a religious person. By utilising "active intelligence" such a person combines the "three *haqīqah*" in his mind and soul. A person at level five may return to a lower level if he or she does not have a means of finding the three *haqīqah*.

As mentioned above, humans are animals when they do not use their hearts, eyes and ears to meet Allah. In this context, the main task of human

beings in this world is to worship Allah by remembering[11] and thanking Him.[12] At the same time, the main task in the relationship between human beings is to establish a strong brotherhood by "understanding each other".[13]

At level six a person starts to think by himself as a human commanded by Allah and to build good relationships with other humans. It can be said that love of God is a central theme in Islamic mysticism (Sufism). Indeed, some, if not all, celebrated Sufi figures expound on the ways in which human beings cultivate their relationship with God through love, which is often depicted as the soul of Sufism' (Khuluq, 1998: 89). To achieve this level, a person must dedicate his life to service to God.

One might argue that the practitioner of the modern social sciences stands at level five. He/She perhaps may investigate the social reproduction of religion (religion's exoteric dimensions) but is unable to map its esoteric meanings (*bāthin*). From the perspective of someone who has already achieved level six, a social scientist may be regarded as "primitive", "uncivilised" and "illiterate", able only to enter into a discourse on exoteric meaning (*dhāhir*). In the words of Naquib Al-Attas, being exterior (*dhāhir*) ... refers to the phenomenal world, or the world of sense and sensible experience – the world of empirical things. [I]nterior (*bāthin*) ... refers to the permanent and transcendent dynamic principle underlying [*dhāhir*] and this refers to the metaphysical source, that is, the Truth Most Exalted' (Al-Attas, 1986: 229).

The Western social sciences therefore allow us to study only social meanings and religious symbols classified as *dhāhir*, not *bāthin*. Bianchi (1979: 300) makes a similar point when he argues that "the activity of the social anthropologist is of primary interest when he tries to locate the living context where the beliefs and religious praxis of a society or cultural

---

[11] Allāh said: *Fadzkurūnī 'adzkurkum wasykurūlī wa lā takfurūn* (Then do ye remember Me you. I will remember you. Be grateful to Me. And reject no Faith) (al-Baqarah (2); 152).

[12] Allāh said: *Wa iżta'ażżana rabbukum la'in shakartum la'azīdannakum wala'in kafartum inna 'ażabī lashadīd* (And remember! Your Lord caused to be declared (publicly): "If ye are grateful, I will add more (favours) unto you: but if ye show ingratitude, truly My punishment is terrible indeed) (Ibrāhīm (14):7).

[13] Allāh said: "*Yā'ayyuhā al-nās innā khalaqnākum min dzakarin wa 'untsā wa ja'alnākum shu'ūbā wa qabāila lita'ārafū inna akramakum 'inda Allāhi 'atqākum inna Allāha 'alīm khabīr* (O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of male and a female. And made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise each other. Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allāh is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And Allāh has full knowledge and is well-acquainted (with all things) (al-Hujurāt (29): 13).

ambience are living and behaving". As Spiro (1979: 322) points out, we can distinguish at least three different anthropological approaches to the study of cultural symbols and symbols systems: (a) phenomenological analysis of the philosophical meanings of the symbols, (b) structural analysis of the logical relationship among the symbols and (c) formal semantic analysis of the classificatory of schemata.

At level seven, a person gains the "three aspects" of life and a believer enters the process of *ma'rifah* (gnosis), the unification of man with God and nature (cosmology). Schimmel (1975: 130) informs us that "the last station on the mystical path are love and gnosis, *mahabba* and *ma'rifah*. Sometimes they were considered complementary to each other, sometimes love was regarded as superior, and at other time gnosis was considered higher". As Chittick (2005: 21) explains, the noun of *ma'rifa[h]*, which is often translated as "gnosis" ... implies direct experience of the thing and recognition of its true nature and actual situation. The "gnostics" are those who achieve this sort of knowledge – *direct, unmediated knowledge of self and God*. Thus "gnosis," ... means simultaneous self-recognition and God recognition. (Italics mine.)

This level of consciousness can only be accessed by particular people, those who have a teacher who is at level six or a "virtual friend", i.e. someone to whom the Prophet Khaidir appears in a dream. As noted in this schema, a social scientist is regarded as an as "animal", unable to understand or access these higher/esoteric levels of experience, who would therefore inevitably conclude that such groups are "fundamentalist" or "radicals" or practitioners of deviant teaching. Neither can they rationalise the religious experience of those at level seven.

We could say that the sociological study of religion is a practice of animals studying other animals. But just as in this schema an animal cannot understand a human, so a social scientist is unable to understand religious experience at higher levels. This also explains why we can study religion only externally, as a social and cultural phenomenon, since we are unable to take seriously the experience of religious reality of the people we study (Knibbe and Versteeg, 2008: 48).

In sum, if we consider that there are different "religious experiences" at different levels of human awareness, then we must find new ways of studying religious experience at the higher levels. As we have already noted, sociologists tend to create a distance when their object is religious.

It is argued in Sufism that someone at the highest religious level is called *insān kāmil* (the perfect man). Many have said that this concept was first formulated by the great Sufi thinker Ibn 'Arabi and further developed by 'Abd al-Karīm al-Jīlī (Al-Attas, 1986: 44; Schimmel, 1975: 281). The

word *insān* has no gender connotation, so in this context the English word "man" must be understood in the same way (Chittick, 2007: 12). It is believed that the original perfect man was the "light of Muhammad" which was made before the creation of Adam. This "light" was given by Allah to his Prophet and whomever He chose as His friends (*awlia Allāh*). It can be said that this level is for every human being who unifies himself with Allah, as in the concept *wahdatul al-wujud*, *ittihād* of al-Busthami and *hulul* of al-Hallāj (Muniron, 1999). Buchman states that "the sacred journey can only be safely accomplished through becoming a disciple of a spiritual master, who is considered a perfect human, *insān kāmil*, having made the journey to God and returned to guide disciples on the way, *tharīqah*, to divinity through his religious instructions" (Buchman, 2004: 131). At level eight, the Muslim subject is more focussed on both, which suggests we need to understand "the mapping of *bāthin*" in order to study "the mapping of *dhāhir*."

In this study, therefore I will approach the patterning of Jamā'ah Tabligh experiences from the perspective not just of the social and cultural (exoteric) but also of these higher, exoteric, perspectives as analysed within the Sufi tradition. From this perspective, members of *Jamā'ah Tabligh* use their religious experience to transcend their animalism and become human. As we shall see in subsequent chapters, Tablighists seek to become *insān* (human). In Islam, it is believed that the main role of humans on earth is to be slaves of God. Of course, a higher aspiration is to become a friend of God (*awlia*). However, given that the former is the main aspiration of those Tablighists among whom I carried out my study, it is the former only with which I am concerned.

In sum, the pyramidal model provides us to some extent with a means of understanding Muslim religious experience. During my field work, I used the model to gain insights into the experience of Muslims, including those who had *karāmat* (supernatural powers) or declared themselves "holy men." I listened to their accounts of their spiritual journeys, just as I did those of the Tablighists with whom I worked. In so doing I shared with them this model of the varieties and levels of religious experience, finding in general that the model was accepted by informants and recognised as a useful means of assessing it. For example, most members of Jamā'ah Tablīgh with whom I discussed the approach agreed that it is a useful means of evaluating the claims of holy men and of Muslim religiosity, indeed religiosity in general.

## Methodology

When I first decided to study Jamā'ah Tablīgh, my background was mainly in Islamic studies. Two issues concerned me: first, how could I approach its members, as many of my fellow Muslims disapproved of the movement? During my years as a Masters student in Kuala Lumpur, I had a housemate who was isolated by our friends because of his involvement in JT. He always disappeared on Saturday nights to participate in JT activities. During my field work, members of the community where I lived were not members; they often reminded me about the dangers of this movement and that its effects on my family life. Second, lacking knowledge of the social sciences, I wondered how to do an ethnographic study among those with the same religious beliefs as myself.

During fieldwork, some Muslims expressed disapproval of Jamā'ah Tablīgh. First, some members of the community accused *karkun* of abandoning their family for their missionary or *da'wa* trips. While many trips were short, some *karkun* spent four months on their *khuruj* in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. In response, some Acehnese *karkun* in Banda Aceh argued that their families would be cared by Allah. The second criticism was the lack of religious knowledge, especially on (*fiqh*) Islamic jurisprudence, among Tablighists. I received this impression not only in Aceh but also in Kuala Lumpur, where respect in terms of religious understanding tends to be reserved for *'ulama*. A friend of mine who is lecturer at Faculty of Shari'ah at IAIN of Ar-Raniry (State Institute of Islamic Studies) in Banda Aceh and as Ph.D. student in UKM (National University of Malaysia) informed me the Tablighists should not be asked for their opinion on Islamic issues as they are not *'ulama*. During my field work, some Muslims informed me that Tablighists tried to conduct themselves like *'ulama*., but they were not. In Aceh this concern was expressed in terms of Jamā'ah Tablīgh not from Acehnese culture. There were at times conflict between the local *'ulama* and *karkun*. Some local 'ulama could possibly lose a form of income from their religious services to the community if *karkun* - who work for Allah and not for fees - assumed such roles. The government was also a source of disapproval at times. For example, the Malaysian government ran a campaign against Jamā'ah Tablīgh in the early 1990s. It was argued that this movement promoted laziness amongst Muslim by encouraging them to live in mosques for a certain period. Of concern was the government staff who

requested a leave of absence in order to undertake Jamā'ah Tablīgh's activities.[14]

And yet, despite these negative images, many young Muslims in Indonesia and Malaysia are drawn to this movement. Part of my motivation to do this research was to understand their attraction to Jamā'ah Tablīgh. Another reason was my desire to interrogate the accuracy of these negative representations by better understanding the form of organisation and religious mission of Jamā'ah Tablīgh.

The project started in November 2006 when I visited the village of Cot Goh in Banda Aceh. My fieldwork was not in the village, but rather in a mosque that was the provincial *markāż* (headquarters) of the movement in Aceh. At the beginning it was not easy to access this movement, because members were suspicious of my aim to study their organisation. However, some of the members I approached asked me to accompany them on a *khurūj* (mission). I was confused by such terms and other key concepts that they used. The first thing I did was to find key informants in the city of Banda Aceh, many of whom tried to get me to join the movement by doing *khurūj*. Although I was looking for information on the history of Jamā'ah Tablīgh in Banda Aceh, I was treated by *karkūn* (a colloquial name for a member of the JT in Malaysia and Indonesia) as a potential member.

I also met some senior *karkūn* to tell them about my project. But they asked me about my commitment to Islam and warned me about "selling" religious information to my university. I wrote in my daily field notes about how they received me as a fellow Muslim and a PhD student from Australia. After several visits, I decided not to live in Cot Goh, because the situation was not safe, especially after the ceasefire between GAM (*Gerakan Aceh Merdeka*, the Free Aceh Movement) and the TNI (The Indonesian Army). I was told that some senior *karkūn* were suspected by the Indonesian military to have been active during military operations in Aceh. Instead, I travelled regularly to the *markāż* by motor cycle and attended the *malam markāż* (weekly meeting of *karkūn*).

A significant problem for me as an Acehnese was to convince my family about the changes in my appearance, since I took to wearing gameez (the robes of an Indian Muslim) and Indian perfume. At the beginning, I told my family that this was part of the requirement of getting a degree in Australia. In general, during my fieldwork, I did not tell them much about the movement or why I slept every Thursday night in Cot Goh. I was strongly advised not bring *Jamā'ah Tabligh* teaching to the

[14] See chapter II.

family. This dilemma led me to think about why many Acehnese, including my family, did not much like the movement. When I departed to the field, especially to the *malam markāż*, I did not wear a gameez or any Tablighist accessories, because my neighbours also suspected the movement of practicing deviant teachings. When I chatted to them at coffee shops, they said that the movement was a danger to the Muslim community. However, a local *ulama* told me that we cannot say the movement is deviant if we have not studied it. Nevertheless, the overall sense from my local neighbourhood was one of concern, with another local *ulama* saying to me that if I studied the movement, I should not bring its teachings to this community.

After two months, in January 2007, I began fieldwork in Malaysia. I arrived at the airport without knowing the location of the Sri Petaling *markāż*. When I lived in Kuala Lumpur in 2001, many of housemates told me about the *markāż*, but did not take me there. At first, I went to the *markāż* as a visitor. Then, I bought all Tablighist accessories in the *markāż*. I went to the toilet to change my clothes and became Tablighist. However, I stayed with my Acehnese friend who opposed the movement. He argued that there was no point studying this movement. According to him, they lacked knowledge on *fiqh*, were dirty, abandoned their families and were very exclusive.

At the same time, during my fieldwork, especially in Sri Petaling I was accused of being a CIA agent or a spy for the Australian government. I say this because during my conversation some *karkūn* assumed that I worked for a Western government. I recorded all of this in my field notes which led me to ask "what would happened if I was too close to *karkūn*"? and "what would happened if I was too far from *karkūn*"? A crucial problem throughout my study was that although I am a Muslim, I had to understand that theological matters could not be negotiated. That is, whenever I came across something that challenged my beliefs, I would have to refrain from passing judgment. As an undergraduate student in comparative Islamic legal thought, I had been trained to investigate an object of research by leaving aside my personal beliefs. When I discussed matters of *fiqh* and *tashawwūf*, I would locate this subject as a human rather than a sacred interpretation. At the same time, I was also concerned about bias, since I did not know how to be a researcher, student and Muslim all at the same time.

In Kuala Lumpur, apart from visiting the *markāż*, I developed a close relationship with a *mohalla* (local branch of JT) in Selangor. I was involved in their meetings and also conducted *khurūj* with them. As mentioned earlier, when I met Tablighists, they tended not to give me any

information directly, but rather invited me to join them as a member. During my fieldwork in Malaysia, Aceh and Pekan Baru, the Tablighist asked me to go on their *da'wa* mission. Also during my fieldwork, I traced the history of the movement by visiting sites where Jamā'ah Tablīgh first came to Malaysia. I visited mosques in Kuala Lumpur and also travelled to Penang, Kelantan, Terengganu, Kedah, and Kuantan. On these trips, I met Malays who told me about the presence of JT and its impact on Islam in Malaysia.

After I finished my fieldwork in Malaysia on June 2007, I returned to Aceh. This time, I was more confident, because I was able to tell Acehnese-Tablighists that I had been in Malaysia for several months. They thought I was doing *khurūj*. I said that I did *khurūj* and mentioned several key words to them. I also met *karkūn* who had spent time in southern Thailand, where I had spent time as a university lecturer. Thus, my second trip to the field was less problematic, although I still had problems with members of my own village community. When in Malaysia, I bought several Islamic books in Arabic and Jawi script which lead me recognise the Sufist elements that coloured the movement. Thus, during my conversation I would give them my own views on Jamā'ah Tablīgh. Besides this, I was also involved in weekly *pengajian* in one of *pesantren*. This was made my fellow villagers since, my research on Jamā'ah Tablīgh, I also joined their religious activities. In addition, in the village I became a traditionalist in the sense that I followed traditionalist ritual, although in Cot Goh I followed the Jamā'ah Tablīgh rituals. Usually, when I visited Cot Goh, I covered my gameez with a jacket.

## Structure

This book is organised around the discussion of five key Tablighist concepts: *markāż* (headquarters), *mushāwarah* (meetings), *ijtimā'* (festival), *bayān* (sermons) and *khurūj* (mission), which represent both the core ideas, experiences and practices of the movement, and the key sites of its religious practice. Each chapter starts with a definition of the concepts and provides a narrative explanation of the way these concepts were put into practice by the Tablighists. A description of the concepts leads me to take into account the combination of the problems of *'aqīdah*, *sharī'ah*, and *ma'rifah* among Muslims towards their religious experiences.

The study begins with the Introduction that highlights the background of study and the issue that will be examined in the next chapters. It also includes a literature review and a discussion of the conceptual framework of the study. Chapter Two explores the history of Jamā'ah Tablīgh in

Southeast Asia; it covers three main issues: the emergence of JT in India and the historical context of Islamic movements in the Muslim world; the coming of JT to Malaysia; and the development of the movement in Aceh.

Chapter Three discusses the national *markāż* in Sri Petaling, where I observed the organisational system of Jamā'ah Tablīgh. In this chapter we can see how the movement is organised at both its national and Asia Pacific headquarters. The material presented in this chapter shows how JT pattern their religious activities as part of *da'wa* and Sufist movement.

In Chapter Four I elaborate on how decisions are made among Tablighists in forum known as *mushāwarah*. Here, I look at how Tablighists organised their activities at the level of the localised "colony" (*mohalla*) and also when going on missions (*khurūj*). This chapter shows how all decision-making is seen as following strict religious guidelines.

Chapter Five describes my experience of a journey with Tablighists to a JT jamboree (*ijtimā'*) in Pekan Baru, including three days of travelling with some members of Jamā'ah Tablīgh. The chapter focuses mainly on the preparations of Aceh Tablighists for the jamboree, as well as the setting and activities of *ijtimā'*. I also examine the role of senior JT religious leaders, known as *mawlana*, and how they provided religious experiences during the *ijtimā'* for Tablighists.

In Chapter Six I explore the religious sermons *(bayān)* that are a frequent part of JT worship. In this chapter I look at one way in which religion can be seen as a "product" and something that can be "regenerated". The yearly congress gives a picture of the Tablighist effort of transformation from animal to human. Thus, the "six points", part of every JT *bayan*, can be seen as a key element of Jamā'ah Tablīgh ideology.

Chapter Seven presents an insiders' account of a three day "going out" (*khurūj*) mission to a mosque.

The final ethnographic chapter, Chapter Eight, describes in greater depth the way religion is practiced and experienced by five Tablighists whose life stories I present.

Finally, in the Conclusion I return to questions raised in the Introduction, summarise the findings of the study and suggest some possibilities for further research on religious movements, especially in Southeast Asia.

# CHAPTER TWO

# THE HISTORY OF JAMĀ'AH TABLĪGH IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

## Introduction

This chapter is based on a study of religious practice and experience among Malay and Achenese members of Jamā'ah Tablīgh, an Islamic missionary movement coloured by Sufi elements which, as noted in the Introduction above, is one of the largest of the numerous movements and organisations dedicated to the revival, reform or revitalisation of Islam that emerged in the twentieth century. Founded in India in 1926, Jamā'ah Tablīgh grew rapidly and is now active throughout the Muslim world, including Malaysia where it has attracted a large number of ethnic South Asian Muslims as well as, more recently and increasingly, ethnic Malays, and Indonesians. What follows is based on research that I carried out as an observer of and participant in many of the basic activities of the organisation in Sri Petaling near Kuala Lumpur, and Aceh in northern Sumatra in 2006 and 2008.

This chapter examines the historical background of the movement in its Indian birthplace before outlining its history in Southeast Asia, particularly Kuala Lumpur and Aceh. In exploring this historical context, I look at the process of transformation of religious experience promoted by JT's expansion from South to Southeast Asia.

The chapter has three parts. The first describes the establishment of Jamā'ah Tablīgh in India. The second section focuses on the coming of the movement to Malaysia, because it first arrived in Southeast Asia in Kuala Lumpur in the 1950s. Thus, the history of JT is dominated by Indian-Muslims and Malays in the region. Most Indian Muslims had been settled in Malaysia for many decades before Jamā'ah Tablīgh's arrival. The description of its coming and development in Aceh is examined in the third section. For these data, I refer to my Aceh fieldwork interviews and observations. It seems that there are no written records on the development of JT in Aceh. During my fieldwork, *karkūn* (a colloquial name for a

member of Jamā'ah Tablīgh in Malaysia and Indonesia) did not tend to discuss its historical origins in Aceh, but were more concerned with attracting me into the movement.

Many Islamic movements have looked to revive Islam through the exercise of socio-political power in order to promote a "return to the Qur'an and Sunnah." However, in the 1920s, many such movements employed missionary and mystical rather than political means to achieve their goals. Dekmejian, in his list of Islamic fundamentalist movements in the Middle East and South Asia, pays no attention to the role of Sufist movements such as Jamā'ah Tablīgh. Rather he focuses on the emergence of radical Islamic movements, linking them to the internal politics of the countries of the Middle East. He argues that there were many causes of Islamic revival, including identity crises, legitimacy crises, elite misrule and coercion, class conflict and modernisation (Dekmejian, 1985: 25-36), ignoring the role of Indian Islam as a source of Islamic revival in the twentieth century.

Although some recognise that Indian Muslims played an important role in Southeast Asia especially in sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Azra, 1994), less attention has been paid to the development of Islamic networks between South Asia and Southeast Asia in 1920s.[1] Most studies of Islamic networks focus on the links between Middle Eastern and Southeast Asian Islam (Abaza, 1994, 2003, 2003b; Laffan, 2003, 2004; Roff, 1967, 1970; Federspiel, 1970, 2001; Mas'ud, 2006). Yet Indian Muslims have played an important role since the coming of Islam to Southeast Asia.[2] The development of intellectual networks, for example, can be found in the links between ulama from India and Southeast Asia, especially those involved in mystical teachings (Sufi). For example, the works of Gujarati scholars such as Nurdīn ar-Rāniri, the great ulama in Aceh who wrote many books on Southeast Asia, are widely read[3] and commented on in

---

[1] For a brief review of the work on Sufism in Indonesia examining the role of Indian-Muslims, see Bruinessen (1998).

[2] One theory is that Islām first came to Southeast Asia from Gurajat in India (see for example, Azra 1994, 2004).

[3] One of his books is *Shirātul Mustaqīm* (Rānirī, n.d in al-Banjārī, n.d). Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas writes about this book as follows: 'This work in Malay was begun in 1643 and completed [in] seven years. It deals with the science of practical judgements pertaining to religious practice (*al-fiqh*), but treats only those aspects concerned with devotional duties (*al-'ibādat*).The part dealing with practical duties (*al-mua'āmalāt*) was treated by 'Abd al-Ra'ūf al-Sinkili (d. after 1693) in his *Mir'āt al-Tullāb*. The *Shirāt al-Mustaqīm* was printed in the margin of the *Sabīl al-Muhtadīn* of Muhammad Arshad in Makkah in 1892.' See (Al-Attas

Islamic boarding schools throughout the region (Bustamam-Ahmad, 2004; Bruinessen, 1994: 7, 1999; Azra, 1994: 166-88; Daudy, 1983: 35-62; Al-Attas, 1986; Steenbrink, 1988). Thus Sufism must be included as one of the paths for the spread of Islam in Southeast Asia (Azra, 1994). It was, moreover, the route by which many non-Muslim Southeast Asians converted to Islam in the early years (Bruinessen, 1994: 4).

In 1924, when the Islamic caliphate was abolished, Muslims began to rethink the pursuit of socio-political power to revive the struggle. In subsequent years, the Azhar ulama called for an international congress in Cairo to elect a new *khalīfah* (Bruinessen, 1995: 120). Muslims were divided into three different groups according to their view of the proper relation between state and religion. The first were the so-called fundamentalists who argued that state and religion must not be separated, and that Muslims should return to the Qur'an and Sunnah. This is the root of fundamentalist or revivalist thought in the Islamic tradition that was linked to Salafism or Wahhabism in Saudi Arabia (for more on this see Bustamam-Ahmad, 2007). Second were the modernists who proposed a return to the Qur'an and Sunnah alongside an adoption of Western ideas on development and modernisation.[4] Third were the secularists who argued that state and religion must be separated.[5] In terms of Islamic political thinking, this idea was promoted by the Egyptian Islamic scholar 'Alī 'Abd al-Razīq, and in Turkey by Kemal Ataturk when he abolished the caliphate on 3 March 1924 (Liebesny, 1975: 289). In Southeast Asia, a similar idea was promoted by Soekarno, one of founding fathers of Indonesia. In the last two decades, secularism in Indonesia has been associated with liberal Muslim intellectuals (see also Federspiel, 2002, 1999).[6]

---

1986: 25). Bruinessen says that this book was reprinted many times in Egypt and Surabaya. This book is in continuous use in Sumatra and Kalimantan (Bruinessen, 1999: 114). During my fieldwork, I attended Islamic studies near the mountain of Seulawah in Banda Aceh, where the people read this book as their source for understanding of Islamic law.

[4] For an introduction to Islamic modernism, see Rahman (1970:317-333). I have utilised this conceptual framework in Bustamam-Ahmad (2001). For the cases of Iran, Egypt and India, see Moaddel (2001)

[5] See also Bustamam-Ahmad (2003: 233-284).

[6] For brief analyses of Muslim though in Southeast Asia, see Riddel, (2003 and 2002). See also Barton (1995, 1997, and 1999); Siddique (1985), Abdullah (1997) and Fealy and Hooker, (2006). For the Middle East, see Abu-Rabi (2003); Wahyudi (2003); and Asyyaukanie (1998:58-95). For a brief introduction to the development of this tradition, see Al-Azmeh (1992).

Other pioneers of Islamic revival, such as Muhammad 'Abduh,[7] Muhammad Jamāl al-Din al-Afghāni,[8] Rasyid Ridhā,[9] Sayyid Qutb,[10] and Al-Maududi,[11] promoted a return to the Qur'an and Sunnah by adopting some Western ideas, such as modernism. Many Muslim pioneers of this era saw that the problem of Islam would be solved by returning to the Qur'an and Sunnah, and establishing an Islamic caliphate through involving themselves in the political arena. Thus, there was much discussion of political ideas such as the state, secularism and modernisation in this period, not only in the Middle East, but also in Southeast Asia.

At the same time, the pioneers of Jamā'ah Tablīgh paid less attention to such matters, instead silently seeking to revive the community by returning them to the era of Prophet. In this context, Mawlana Ilyās, the founder of JT, promoted a return to the original sources of Islam (the Qur'an and Sunnah) by doing what the Prophet did during his life. Mawlana Ilyās was concerned with internal problems of the soul, the decline in Islamic worship and the neglect of missionary activity, all of which were practiced by the Prophet in Mecca and Medina.

## The Emergence of Jamā'ah Tablīgh

In 1927, the Jamā'ah Tablīgh movement's founder, Mawlana Muhammad Ilyās bin Muhammad Ismail al-Hanafi ad-Diyubandi al-Jisti al-Kandahlawi (1885-1944), was a Deabond-associated Sufi-scholar (Metcalf, 1978, 2002, 1996,1996, 2004) in Mewat, south of Delhi in India. On the Deoband scholars, Reetz (2005: 209) writes: "they meant to rectify the perceived lack of religious education among the Muslims in British India as the religious scholars feared a loss or weakening of Islamic identity in the wake of the spread of English language education and western values". According to Haq (1972: 45), this movement "was know as *Bhopali Jamā'ah* because after the death of the founder its annual conventions were often held in Bhopal (now in Madhya Pradesh). Ilyās himself liked to refer to the movement as *Tahrik-i-Imān* or "the Faith Movement". He regarded Muslims as a *jamā'ah* (Islamic community)

---

[7] Esposito (1984)
[8] Esposito (1984:46-52).
[9] Sukarta (1999: 50-62)
[10] Binder (1988:170-206); Choueiri (1997); Haddad (1993); Shepard (1992); Nettler (1994); Khattab (2004); Akhavi (1997).
[11] See footnote no.2 in this chapter.

which has already been formed, so did not consider that he was establishing a new one.

As a movement, Jamā'ah Tablīgh aims to reform individual behaviour in order to develop an ideal Muslim society in line with the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (Rashid, 2006: 56). Ali (2003: 175) states that:

> Its function is to encourage the Muslim masses in reverting the ways of Prophet Muhammad as an ideal life-form. The aim is to remove the stains of materialism from the hearts and mind of Muslim and inculcate in them a high moral order and guide them toward righteousness and Islamic spirituality.

Mawlana Muhammad Ilyās was affiliated with the Tarīqah Naqshabandiyyah, a Sufi order that considered the observance of *sharī'ah* as an integral part of their Sufi practices (Ahmad, 2006).

Mawlana Ilyās was born in 1885 in the town of Kadhla in the Muzaffarnar district. His family was particularly noted for its piety and commitment to the cause of Islamic reform spearheaded by the noted eighteenth century Delhi scholar, Shah Waliullāh (1703-62) (Sikand, 2006: 178). Mawlana Ilyās was also one of the most influential scholars to have graduated from the Deabond School in India. This school is located in a small country town northeast of Delhi, where the original *madrasah* or seminary was founded in 1867. It has played an important role in Islamic education in India, where many famous Islamic pioneers, such as Abu A'la al-Maudūdi, the founder of Jamā'ah-ī-Islāmi in Pakistan taught many famous Islamic pioneers. However, the teachers at this school were probably influenced by Shah Waliullāh, an Islamic reformist who also influenced Mawlana's family. Metcalf writes that "*Jamā'ah Tablīgh* was an offshoot of the *Deoband* movement ... it represented an intensification of the original Deobandi commitment to individual regeneration apart from any explicit political program".[12] Mawlana joined Deoband in 1908 and later became an instructor at one of Deoband's sister institutions – Mazahir al-'Ulūm in Saharanpur (Upadhyay, 2006).

There were several reasons for the emergence of the Jamā'ah Tablīgh movement in India. First, Mawlana's desire to return the Islamic community to the tradition of the Prophet through JT was a response to militant Hindu efforts of *suddhi* (purification) and *sangatan* (consolidation) among Indians at that time (Ahmad, 1991: 511). In 1922, this Hindu revivalist movement, called Arya Samaj, ran a well-organised campaign to return a large number of Muslim groups that retained many Hindu customs

[12] Barbara D. Metcalf (2004: 265).

to the fold (Sikand, 2006: 180). Mawlana Ilyās intended to purify Muslim practices in Mewat, South India, the place where JT emerged, not only because some Muslims were being converted to Hinduism by militants, but also because of their maintenance of Hindu cultural traditions.

Second, the establishment of Jamā'ah Tablīgh was a reaction to the decline of the *khilāfah* (caliphate) movement in the Muslim world. It is believed that in the 1920s, the Islamic resurgence in the Muslim world was related to the failure of the Islamic caliphate. Many Islamic movements promoted the concept of the return to the Qur'an and Sunnah as the pathway to the establishment of a new Islamic society, called Khilāfah Islāmiyyah. In this context, Jamā'ah Tablīgh desired to bring the ummah (Islamic community)[13] together through the education and reform of individuals (Ahmad, 1991: 516). Mawlana Ilyās, according to one author, "felt disappointed with the failure of the *khilāfah* movement and the assertive role of Hindu leaders in the freedom movement" in India (Upadhyay, 2006: 2). It is often claimed that JT is an apolitical Islamic movement unconcerned with the establishment of an Islamic state. However, the movement does have a certain hidden political agenda, one to be pursued through the reform of the individual (see also Sikand, 2003: 42-3).

The historical background shows that Jamā'ah Tablīgh was originally a response to local issues and agendas in South Asia. During its emergence there were also some other Islamic movements that sought to return the *ummah* to the Qur'an and the Sunnah. However, JT was also influenced by broader social political and religious developments such as the decline of the Islamic caliphate in the Muslim world. Thus, even though the movement was not political, it could not escape the political issues of the time. Masud maintains that:

> The *Khilāfat* movement utilized the techniques of missionaries and shaped the methodology of *Da'wa* in India along modern lines. Muslim leaders learned the skills of modern organization, publicity techniques, mass contact and the use of the printing press from *Khilāfah*...Mawlana Muhammad Ilyās, the founder of the [Jamā'ah Tablīgh], benefited from this movement greatly (Masud, 2000: li).

Third, there is a tendency to view the establishment of Jamā'ah Tablīgh as being due to the dissemination of Sufism among mystical sect groups in South Asia (Bruinessen, 1999; Haq, 1972). It is believed that JT is part of the Deoband school, "a reformed Hanafi Sunnism which eschews

[13] On *ummah*, see Al Faruqi (2005); Mandaville (2001); Laffan (2003).

the cult of saints but accepts a purified from of Sufism" (Gaborieau, 2006). Mawlana Ilyās was himself a member of the *Chistiyyah* Sufis in India (Haq, 1972), however, he did not focus on the conversion of non-Muslims to Islam. Their objective was to provide spiritual guidance to the people (Masud, 2000: xxxix; Haq, 1972: 65; Sikand, 2002:66; Ahmad, 1991: 511). Thus, Jamā'ah Tablīgh's aim was to focus on spiritual matters, rather than the social and political issues so important to other Islamic movements. The other Sufi movement that influenced Mawlana Ilyās in his teaching was the *Qadīriyah*, which did not associate with rulers, taking part in political affairs or accept government service (Haq, 1972: 59).

However, Mawlana Ilyās did not adopt the Sufi way of life, in which the teacher lives at home and waits for people to come to learn from him. He went out to visit people, dispensing spiritual guidance on how to live as a Muslim. But in his movement, Mawlana Ilyās developed seven principles, taken from Sufi practices: the article of faith, prayer,[14] knowledge (of the principle of Islam) and remembrance (of God), respect for Muslims, sincerity of purpose, donation of time, and abstention from useless and worldly talk (Haq, 1972: 66; Khan, 1986: 24; Ahmad, 1991: 513). These principles have become pillars for all JT members. In 1934, according to Masud (2000), Mawlana announced the guiding principles for the movement as follows:

1. Correct memorisation of the formulae of faith.
2. Regularity in the performance of prayers.
3. Education and promotion of knowledge.
4. Formal appearance in accordance with Islam.
5. Adherence to Islamic customs and elimination of idolatrous practices.
6. *Purdah* (veiling) of women.
7. Strict observance of Islamic practices in marriage ceremonies.
8. Promotion of Islamic dress for women.
9. Abiding by the Islamic faith and rejection of other religions.
10. Regard for each other's rights.
11. Necessity of participation of responsible persons of the community in all meetings.
12. Teaching children about religion prior to formal education.
13. Efforts for the propagation of religion.

[14] It is compulsory for Muslims to pray five times in a day starting from early morning until late of night. The name of prayers are *subuh*, *dhuhur*, *'ashar*, *magrib*, and *'isya*.

14. Observing cleanliness.
15. Protecting each other's honour.

In fact, these principles were similar to those of many other Islamic movements in the 1900s. However, Jamā'ah Tablīgh programs seem to be a mixture of pan-Islamism and Islamic Sufism. Pan-Islam, originally promoted by pioneers such as Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghani (1837-1897), aims to unify Muslims around the world in an Islamic world community, following the abolition of the Islamic caliphate by republican Turkey in 1924 (Sela, 2002). In Southeast Asia, for example, many Islamic organisations were inspired by this movement, including *Paderi*, Persatuan Islam, Muhammadiyah, Sarekat Islam, and the *Kaum Muda* movement (Abdullah, 1966, 1970, 1971, 1996; Lee, 1942: 278-287; Peacock, 1978; Federspiel, 1970; 1970a; 2001; Roff, 1967; Noer, 1973), promoted purification through the practice of principles similar to those implemented by Jamā'ah Tablīgh. In addition, the program of "purification" of Muslim practices was heavily influenced by Islamic pioneers in the Middle East, such as Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghāni, Muhammad 'Abduh, and Rashid Ridha. Jamā'ah Tablīgh, however, did not desire to "bring back *ummah* to Qur'ān and the Sunnah" through political action or involvement with the government. Its objective was "to bring about a reawakening of faith and a reaffirmation of the religio-cultural identity of Muslims" (Ahmad, 1991: 511). It is claimed that JT took its example from the *Khalīfah ar-Rasyidūn* in the early Islamic world and justified its ideology by reference to the Qur'an and Hadith (Masud, 2002: 105).

Regarding Jamā'ah Tablīgh utilising Sufi methods, Haq says that:

> Ilyās adopted *sufi* terms and practices such as *żikr*, *murāqabahi,* and *chillah* with certain changes, to popularize Sufism and create a better understanding of it among the masses; at the same time he sought to eliminate abuses which had crept into *sufi* orders contributing to their unpopularity among a certain section of the community (Haq, 1972: 173).

Many scholars believe that the activities of Jamā'ah Tablīgh began when Mawlana made his pilgrimage in 1926 (Masud: 2000: 9). However, it was unlikely that the movement started in 1926, because during this period Mawlana Ilyās made many journeys to perform the *hajj*. His first *hajj* was in 1914, while in 1916 he returned to teaching at the madrassah (Haq, 1972: 87). In 1926, he made his second *hajj*, after which he lived for five months in Medina before returning to India with the conviction that preaching should be undertaken among the masses. During his stay in Medina, Mawlana Ilyās did preach Islam by conducting *khurūj*. This

method was then adopted as the *da'wa* method by JT members when preaching Islam. Thus, Jamā'ah Tablīgh began in 1930s, when Mawlana Ilyās completed his fourth *hajj* and met the Sultan, King Ibn Sa'ūd in March 1938. The objective of his meeting with the king was to obtain his permission to preach. Accompanied by 'Abdullah al-Dihlawi, 'Abdur Rahman Mazhar and Ihtishamul, Mawlana Ilyās met the sultan on14 March that year. King Ibn Sa'ūd received them with great honour and talked to them for some time, after which the visitors presented their petition and took their leave (Haq, 1972: 93). I suspect that Mawlana Ilyās requested permission from the king to preach Islam in Saudi Arabia for political reasons. With the king's permission, he would have the authority to preach Islam in his country and the rest of the Middle East.

It is unlikely that we will find sources on the transnationalisation of Jamā'ah Tablīgh during Mawlana Ilyas's lifetime. Nevertheless, soon after his death in 1944, his son, Mawlana Muhammad Yūsuf Kandhalawi (1917-65) became the new amir (head) of the movement (Masud, 2000:13-17; Gaborieau, 2000: 122-23). One of Mawlana Yūsuf's most sophisticated agendas was to promote the movement around the world. It is reported that under his leadership, Jamā'ah Tablīgh spread to all of parts of India and Pakistan and beyond, to Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Syria, Jordan, Turkey, England, Japan and the USA (Troll, 1985: 142; Gaborieau, 2000: 122-23).

**Table 1: Chronology of the first *jamā'ah* sent abroad**

| Year | Destination | From | Description |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1946 | Hijaz | India | First from India |
| 1946 | Egypt, Sudan, Syria | India | First *Jamā'ah* to its destination |
| 1950 | Hijaz | Pakistan | First pedestrian *Jamā'ah* from Pakistan |
| 1951 | Egypt, Sudan, Syria | Pakistan | First from Pakistan |
| 1952 | Malaysia, Singapore | Pakistan | First from Pakistan |
| 1952 | USA | Pakistan | First from Pakistan |
| 1952 | England | Pakistan | First from Pakistan |
| 1956 | Japan | Pakistan | First from Pakistan |
| 1956/1957 | Turkey | Pakistan | First from Pakistan |
| 1961/1962 | France | Pakistan | First from Pakistan |
| 1962 | Western Europe, Yugoslavia | Pakistan | First from Pakistan |

Source: (Gaborieau, 2000: 138)

It seems that the internationalisation of Jamā'ah Tablīgh began when Mawlana Yūsuf became *amir*. It also marked a change in the *da'wa* target among JT, where Mawlana Yūsuf tended to preach Islam not only to Muslims but also to non-Muslims. Table 1 above shows that JT members made journeys to Western countries as well (Sikand, 2002; 1998:171-93). Troll (1985: 142) asserts that "from his time onwards *Jama'ah*s began moving out over the whole world, on foot, by bus, train or airplane or any other suitable means". In sum, by 1962, after eighteen years with Mawlana Yūsuf as amir of Jamā'ah Tablīgh, a worldwide network had been established, stretching from Tokyo to Chicago (Gaborieau, 2000: 130).

From this history, we can see that the emergence of Jamā'ah Tablīgh was due to many factors. The socio-political situation in India had led Mawlana Ilyās to revive his society by returning them to the mode of life of the Prophet. Here, Mawlana began his initiation with opposition to Hindu missionaries, indicating that Jamā'ah Tablīgh was an answer to Hindu-isation. The second response to the drive to convert Muslims by Hindu revivalists was Mawlana Ilyās's effort to revive the Sufi life among individual Muslims. His links with Naqsyabandi are an indication of the Sufi elements. Historically, the name of the sect was adopted from its founder, Baha' al-Dīn Naqsyaband (d. 1389). However, he did not found the *tharīqah* (a Sufi group), but instead only systemised the teaching and methods with certain ritual and practices that explicitly related to the founder of the *tharīqah* (Bruinessen, 1998: 48). In other words, Naqsyabandi provided a different way to worship Allah, using Sufist rituals. According to Van Bruinessen, this *tharīqah* came to India in 1592. Nevertheless, the expansion of Sufism in India did not begin in the seventeenth century. According to Schimmel, "the full impact of Sufism began to be felt in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, after the consolidation of the main sufi orders in the central provinces of Islām" (Schimmel, 1975: 345).

What I want to emphasise here is that Mawlana Ilyās adopted many Sufi teachings in his mission. As mentioned above, he affiliated his name with the Chistī and some of his teaching tends to be similar to that of the Naqsyabandi. As we shall see, the teaching of Jamā'ah Tablīgh is part of Sufi orders. For example, this movement utilised the concept of *chilla*, named *khurūj*. The *chilla* involves going out from the community for forty days (see Chapter VII). In addition, the movement adopts the concept of *tawajjuh*, used to describe the close relationship between master and *murid* (disciple) in Naqsyabandi (Schimmel, 1975:237; Werbner, 2003: 173). In Jamā'ah Tablīgh, this word is mentioned during the *bayān* (religious sermons) (see Chapter 6). There is also the concept of *jażbah* which is

seen as one way for the spiritual master (*mursyid* or *murād*) in a Sufi order to understand and control the spiritual situation and level among his *murid* (disciples) (Masyhudi, 2003: 37). The real condition of *jażbah* is *madjżūb*. Of this concept, Schimmel says:

> ...the Muslim mystics knew that there is another way of reaching higher experiences: it is the *jadzba*, "attraction," by which a person can be exalted, in one spiritual experience, into a state of ecstasy and perfect union. However, it seems typical that the name of *madjżūb*, "the attracted one," was usually given to people who were mentally deranged and who were, in a sense, thrown out of the way of normal behavior by overwhelming shock of an "unveiling" (Schimmel, 1975: 105).

This concept is discussed in Chapter 4 as one way a *karkūn* is entitled to do many *taqaza* (requests) during meetings before *khurūj*, *ijtimā'* and *khidmat*. Thus, it can be said that this movement uses Sufi concepts, although during my field work, there were no sessions during which these concepts were explained to members.

As I show in this book, Jamā'ah Tablīgh follows one of the main aims of Sufism, which is to love God and "meet" Him personally in *khayāli* (the imagination). It makes sense that Mawlana Ilyās did not claim to have established a new community. But, what made his different from many other Sufi orders was that members of his group went outside to invite people to worship Allah in a mosque. Thus, the Tablighists combined the mystical life of Sufism with *da'wa* practices. To sum up, let me quote from Scharbordt who argues that:

> Many Muslim reformers and Orientalist scholars attribute to Sufism an inherent anti-modernism, blaming it for the intellectual stagnation of the Muslim world because of its mystical obscurantism and its contamination with non-Islamic innovations. The Sufism one encounters in figures such as Afghāni and 'Abduh is not anti-modern, backwards and obscurantist but was, on the contrary, the driving force in facilitating their intellectual engagement with the values of Western modernity. Future research on the Sufi background of Muslim reformers in modern Islam might correct the image of an anti-modern Sufism by looking at Sufi movements located on the margins, outside official Islam. Such Sufi movements ... might prove to have played a much greater role in the modernization of Muslim societies and efforts of Muslim thinkers to reconcile Islam with modernity (Scharbrodt, 2007: 114-115).

## The coming of Jamā'ah Tablīgh to Malaysia

In Kuala Lumpur, Jamā'ah Tablīgh was introduced by Mawlana Abdul Malik Madani, who came to Singapore and Selangor in 1952 as a representative of his *markāż* (headquarters) at Nizamuddin (Abdullah, 1997: 78). Initially, JT received support in towns such as Penang, Kuala Lumpur and Singapore, where there were large Indian Muslim communities. In the 1970s, it started to recruit Malay members. The first person approached was Dārul Arqām leader, Ustāż Ashaari Haji Muhammad who joined Jamā'ah Tablīgh. He made a journey (*khurūj*) with his followers, as Jamā'ah Tablīgh, members to Singapore for ten days (Abdullah, 1997: 79). According to Nagata "like Dārul Arqām, Tablīgh is fundamentalist in orientation: through *da'wa*, it aims both to revive and clarify the basic teachings of the Koran, and to show their relevance to modern society" (Nagata, 1980: 422). In addition, Syed Serajul Islam maintains that "they started going around the country by preaching the message of Islam. They held informal talks asking people to return to the true path of Islam" (Islam, 2005: 119). More recently, with the resurgence of Islamic missionary activities, JT has succeeded in penetrating the Malay community, even at village level (Jomo and Shabery, 1992: 82).

Regarding the story of the coming of Tablighists from India to Malaysia, one of senior *karkūn* in Kuala Lumpur, named Hassan, told me that the first target of the mission was to attract Indian Muslims, not Malays. Hassan worked for a company in Kuala Lumpur, but had been a member of Jamā'ah Tablīgh in his home country, India. He spoke Tamil, Urdu, English and Malay. His family was from Pakistan and had settled in Kuala Lumpur in the early 1940s. During his period in India he knew and met some *Mawlana*s in Nizamuddin. He may have even met Mawlana Yūsuf while he was doing Tablighist activities at the international *markāż*. As already indicated, Mawlana Yūsuf sent out many groups of Jamā'ah Tablīgh abroad, including to Malaya. Hassan became the JT representative in Malaysia.

During the coming of Jamā'ah Tablīgh to Malaya, there was an increase in the size of the Indian community in Malaya in places such as Kuala Lumpur, Penang and Singapore. Regarding the migration of Indians to Malaya, Sandhu writes: "the dominant factor in the increase of the Indian population in Malaya was the excess of immigrants over emigrants" (Sandhu, 2006: 158). This is because the Malay community at that time was still "second class" and most businessmen were Chinese or Indian. They controlled and employed the Malay people in plantations. I interviewed a Malaysian-Indian named Nazaruddin, born in Malaysia

before 1957, who was also a *karkūn* pretending to be a Malay. I asked him about the marginalised Indian community in Malaysia. He answered:

> This is because our old generation treated Malays very badly. Many Indian businessmen employed Malays in their rubber plantation and categorized Malays as "second class." Now, they have taken revenge on our second and third generations, where Malays have become the elite and control the government and categorize us as "second class."

Chandra Muzaffar provides us with another picture of the marginalisation of Indians after independence:

> It was this prosperity that brought some indirect benefits to the disadvantaged by way of schools, health clinics, piped water supply, electricity, and the like. The Indian poor gained from these developmental efforts, as did the poor in other communities. At the same time, it was an expanding economy and the concomitant prosperity which enabled groups of Indians, among others, to establish themselves in the middle and upper classes. Some of these Indian professional and business elites even managed to wield a little bit of influence over the government process (Muzaffar, 2006: 227).

Hassan and Nazaruddin are Indian businessmen, not representatives of "the poor community" in Kuala Lumpur. The first group, according to Ahmad, was received by Zainuddin in his house. Nazaruddin is the son of Zainuddin and still in his teens. They own a company called the Zainuddin Corporation. When the group came to Kuala Lumpur, Rahman arranged a meeting with Zainuddin. He asked them to stay at the *Masjid India*.

The Jamā'ah Tablīgh strategy was very successful, because they received a warm welcome from Indian Muslim businessmen in Kuala Lumpur. At the same time, Malays still did not know much about the movement. Nazaruddin used to do *khurūj* with his father, travelling around Malaysia from Kuala Lumpur to Ipoh, from Ipoh to Penang, and from Penang to Kedah. Hassan, for example, travelled around the Malay Peninsula in the 1960s, on foot, from one mosque to another, as part of *khurūj*. To assist the arrival of Indian *karkūn*, he was familiar with the immigration staff at the airport. Whenever Indian people came to Malaysia, the staff would call him for "confirmation". He was close to some Indian Muslim businessmen in Kuala Lumpur and one of the administrative staff of *Masjid India*.

Photo 1 The *Masjid India* in the middle Masjid Jamek Market, Kuala Lumpur (Author, 2007)

It is important to emphasise the role of Indian Muslims in spreading Jamā'ah Tablīgh in Malaysia. As Nagata points out "Tablīgh could thus be seen as one means whereby the marginal Indian-Muslim can achieve recognition as a Malay or *bumiputra*, the most effective route through religion and culture" (Nagata, 2006: 534).

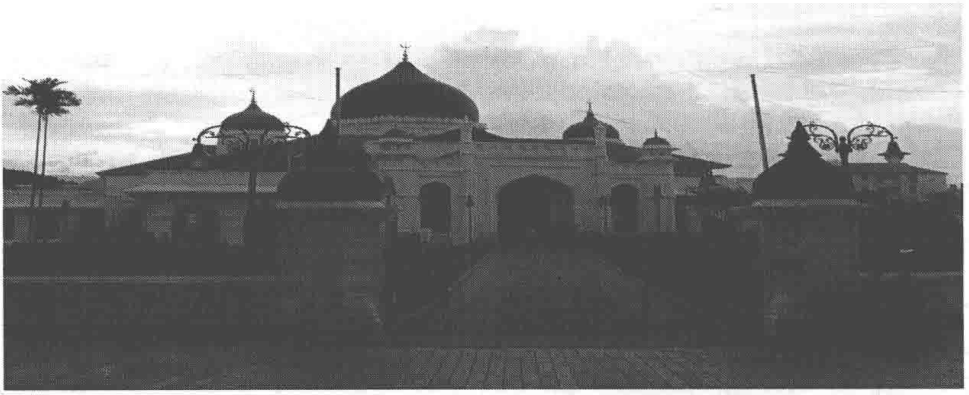


Photo 2 The *Kapitang Keling* mosque for the Indian community in Penang (Author, 2007)

Members of *Jamā'ah Tablīgh* pay little attention to the socio-political situation in Malaysia. They travel around the country from one mosque to another, from one state to another. Nazaruddin told me that during 1950s, most members did not tell people the name of Jamā'ah Tablīgh. They simply slept in mosques, inviting local people to join them on their trip. The main targets were Indian mosques, for example in Penang at *Masjid*

*Kapitan Keling*. When I travelled to Penang to visit this mosque, a local man told me the history of Tablighists in the area. For him, whoever spreads the message of the Prophet is a Tablighist. However, *da'wa* (Islamic missions) in Malaya, according to him, were started by Indian Muslims, when Islam first arrived in Nusantara. He did not know about the coming of Tablighists to his area. However, the surrounding area was dominated by an Indian market. Along the road, Indian Muslims sold jewellery and changed money. Nazaruddin said that most Indian businesses are in trade and rubber plantations. In Penang, Indian Muslims employed Malays from Kedah as workers. In this period Malays were struggling for their independence from the British. However, the migration of Indians to Malaya and the attitude of British towards Malays, had produced a "cultural space" for Jamā'ah Tablīgh to spread "South Asian Islamic values." Regarding the position of Malays and other ethnic groups in Malaya in relation to Indians, Hwang writes " ...for the Indians, the majority of them were estate workers. This meant that the majority of the Malays was generally found in lower income economic activities while the non-Malays were found in the higher-level economic activities" (Hwang, 2003: 30).

The coming together of Jamā'ah Tablīgh and Malays began with the national riots of 1969[15] and the spirit of Islamic revivalism in Malaysia. Abdullah (2003: 55) says that "1969 may be considered the launching pad for Malaysia's *da'wa* movement". However, Shamsul says, in his *From British to Bumiputera Rule*, that "the 13 May 1969 incident was ironically, a blessing in disguise for the Malay capitalist" (Baharuddin, 2004: 191). There is a connection between these arguments, because the spirit of Islamic revivalism then could be seen from the meeting of Young Malays with Jamā'ah Tablīgh, and for elite Malays one of the outcomes of the riot was the NEP (National Economic Policy), a government program to assist Malay in socio-economic affairs. Shamsul maintains that "it is not uncommon for scholars to assume that the NEP was formulated solely as a government response to the bloody incident" (Baharuddin, 2004: 190). Nazaruddin told me about the situation when Malays demonstrated in Chinese business areas (Chow Kit) in several parts of Kuala Lumpur. During the riots, Nazaruddin said that in Kampung Baru, a Malay-dominated area, many JT members were conducting *khurūj* in the Kampung Baru mosque, where other Malays were demonstrating against the Chinese. After the demonstration, Malays went to the mosque. The

[15] Regarding the National Riot in 1969 and it implications see Abdullah (2003; 45-53); Kheng (2002:121-156).

Tablighists, who were Indian, served meals. Nazaruddin noted that most of the young Malays became interested in Jamā'ah Tablīgh activity. It is widely recognised that many of the demonstrators, even the pioneers, were students at the University of Malaya (Esposito and Voll, 1999, 2001). This was an era of the establishment of the Abdurrahman mosque in the area of University of Malaya as the centre for the young-Malay *karkūn* in Kuala Lumpur. Nazaruddin argued that the spirit of Islamic revivalism in Malaysia had been influenced by the spirit of Islamic mission promoted by the members of JT. Thus, in the 1970s, many Malays were attracted to and became members of Jamā'ah Tablīgh (Seng, 2005).

After the May 1969 riots, many *da'wa* movements emerged in Malaysia. Some say that this was a sign of the influence of the 1979 Iranian revolution or the Islamic movements in Indonesia, especially among students (Anwar, 1987; Hassan, 2006; Mansurnoor, 1997). And yet the establishment of *da'wa* movements in Malaysia took place before the Iranian revolution.[16] ABIM (Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia) for example, was established in 1971 by several former members of the National Association of Malaysian Islamic Students (PKPIM). According to Jomo and Cheek (1993: 85) "since its formation, ABIM has received its strongest support from Muslim youth in institutions of higher learning". This movement called "for the introduction of Islamic law, educational and economic system, and political reform as its political impact" (Abdullah, 2003: 83). Dārul Arqām was formed in 1968 and was originally called Rumah Putih (White House). However, on 28 February 1981, its name was changed to Dārul Arqām. (Abdullah, 2003: 99).

In response to the emergence of *da'wa* movements in Malaysia, the government also set up many *da'wa* foundations. These included YADIM (Yayasan Dakwah Islam Malaysia, the Islamic *Da'wah* Foundation Malaysia), established in 1974, and JAKIM (Jawatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia, Department of Islamic Development Malaysia) formed by the Malay sultans in 1968. There were other important *da'wa* movements funded by government elites for the special purpose of promoting Islam to atheists or to train newly converted Muslims in Islamic teaching. PERKIM (Muslim Welfare Organisation of Malaysia) was founded by a group of prominent Malaysian Muslims, including Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra, Tan Sri S.O.K Obaidillah (an Indian Muslim), Haji Ibrahim Ma (a Chinese Muslim) and Tan Sri Mubin Sheppard (Zin, 2006: 47-8).

---

[16] On the Iranian Revolution generally see Kurzman (1996:163-170); Burns (1996: 349-388); Ferdows (1983: 11-15); Griffith (1979: 132-138); Halliday (1980: 3-5); Keddie (1980: 527-542, 1988); Moaddel (1992: 353-397); Paul (1999: 183-217); Rasler (1996: 132-152); Sukidi (2005: 401-412); Zubaida (1988: 3-7).

In the 1980s, Malaysia witnessed the increased influence of Islam in many aspects of life. Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad launched his policy to "Islamise Malaysia" through government policy (Hwang, 2003). The *da'wa* movements also played an important role in Malaysian Islamisation by adopting a socio-cultural approach (Nagata, 1984, 1980, 1983; Abu Bakar, 1981; Anwar, 1987; Baharuddin, 1998, 1997; Mansurnoor, 1997). PAS, an opposition Islamic party, utilised the charisma of ulama in the socio-political arena and urged the Islamisation of Malaysia through political power by the establishment of an Islamic state and implementation of Islamic law (Noor, 2003, 2003b; Ahmad, 2001). Thus this decade was an era of various attempts to promote Islam as the spirit of Malayness.

During this era, Jamā'ah Tablīgh, too, was renegotiating with Malayness. The process of defining Malay privilege in many aspects of social and political life led to a homogenisation of identity among Muslims in the country. An Indian Muslim told me that Indians must think about a clear identity in Malaysia. Because Jamā'ah Tablīgh was not part of the political elite, the movement was not seen as part of this process of Islamisation. However, JT activities have revived the spirit of Islam among Malays since the 1980s. This is not to say that the government paid less attention to the movement. As Nagata says, "Government and party (UMNO) authorities too, far from viewing Tablīgh's non-political stance as praiseworthy, have somewhat paradoxically accused it of persuading Muslims to 'stay away from the ballot box,' thus presumably weakening the Malay base of the electorate and vote, and have asserted that 'Islam and politics do not go together'"(Nagata, 2006: 534).

Following this accusation, Jamā'ah Tablīgh also began to be accused of *deviant teaching*. But this claim was not because of the Indian influence on Malay Muslims. An informant, a senior anthropologist at the Malaysian National University (UKM), told me that some states in the country warned Malay people not to join this movement because it promoted "laziness" among Malay Muslims. In 1992, JT activities were banned in some states. In mid-March of that year, Malacca state announced the banning of Jamā'ah Tablīgh because its followers were said to be engaging in mystical and ascetic activities, thereby neglecting their responsibility in this world (*Berita Harian*, 12 March 1992). State Executive Councilor Abdul Rahim said that "many government employees followed the *Jamā'ah Tablīgh* and forgot the duties of their office". He also said that "many *Tablīgh* followers are only interested in attending gathering in mosques and *surau*s to the point of neglecting their jobs and families" (*New Straits Times*, 12 March 1992). Before the Malacca

announcement, Sabah state also notified people that Jamā'ah Tablīgh was prohibited because it promoted laziness. Some say that this announcement was delivered four years before the ban in Malacca. One reason given for the banning of Tablīgh in Sabah was "deviant teaching", which challenged the charisma and authority of the Sabah Islamic Council (*Berita Harian*, 14 March 1992).

While Sabah and Malacca prohibited Jamā'ah Tablīgh activities, other states, including Kelantan, Terengganu, Negeri Sembilan, Johor and Perak, did not. Deputy State Executive Council for Kelantan, Abdul Halim Abdul Rahman, commenting on the banning of Jamā'ah Tablīgh in Malacca said, "if the movement's activities were questionable, the State Government would discuss the matter with the movement's leaders and try to correct them if they were found to be wrong" (*New Strait Times*, 13 March 1992). Fadzil Noor, a former PAS leader in Terengganu, said that "the ban is not good for the development of Islamic *da'wa* in the country" (*New Strait Times*, 13 March 1992). However, in some states, including Johor and Perak, the Islamic Council monitored the movement, waiting for formal ruling by the mufti (Islamic jurist consultant). Nevertheless, there were no formal decisions by the State Department of Religious Affairs. The central government did not respond formally to the banning of Jamā'ah Tablīgh. Pusat Islam, a government institution for Islamic affairs, conducted a study of the movement and its impact on Malays. As I show in Chapter 3, the government sent one of its staff members to be a *karkūn* to spy on JT. He concluded that there were "no problems" with the teachings of the movement.

Former deputy prime minister, Abdul Hamid Othman, said in a national newspaper that Jamā'ah Tablīgh was not anti-Islam, but that their approach and missionary activities could have detrimental effects on Muslims in Malaysia (*Berita Harian*, 14 March 1992). A week after this interview, on behalf of Pusat Islam, he said that there was no justification for the banning of Jamā'ah Tablīgh in the country (*Berita Harian*, 21 March 1992). However, to control and monitor this movement, JAWI (the Islamic Religious Department of Federal Territory) would "involve" itself in the administration of the mosque at Sri Petaling.

Jamā'ah Tablīgh members did not comment on the banning and negative media images of the movement, or challenge the government's decisions, which was an apparently successful strategy because, at this time, JT membership increased and they established their own headquarters in Sri Petaling (see Chapter 3). They also cooperated with the government in administering the Sri Petaling mosque. A *karkūn* said that they established the mosque for Allah and would finish it even if the

government took over its administration (*Berita Harian*, 18 March 1992). This strategy attracted more Malays to the movement because the *markāż* was seen as under the "control" of government. In other words, if the government did not declare that Jamā'ah Tablīgh was practicing deviant teaching, then it was safe for Malays to join. There have still been no attempts by the national government to ban the movement, and it now has state headquarters throughout Malaysia, even in Malacca and Sabah.

In sum, the development of Jamā'ah Tablīgh in Malaya had six phases. The first involved transnationalisation of Jamā'ah Tablīgh among the Indian community in Malaysia, especially Indian businessmen in Kuala Lumpur. The second phase was characterised by the influence of JT on the template of national history of Malaysians after independence. Jamā'ah Tablīgh introduced a new representation of "real Muslims", including the transformation of Jamā'ah Tablīgh from an Indian to a Malay trend. The third period involved JT in spreading the spirit of Islam among young Malays in Kuala Lumpur. By centring its activities in Masjid Abdurrahman, it attracted many Malay students, while the Indian mosque became a centre for older Malay and Indian Muslims. When the students finished their studies, they became involved in many different sectors, thus further spreading Jamā'ah Tablīgh. The fourth phase was marked by JT's penetration into the Malay Muslim community as a whole, not just that of well-educated Malays, but also those in rural areas and Malay villages. During the fifth phase, JT was challenged in several states, especially in Sabah and Malacca. It was banned for the same reasons as Dārul Arqām was dissolved. At this time the government continued to exercise direct control over Islamic movements that they felt might decrease the authority of the Malay elite. Neither Jamā'ah Tablīgh nor Dārul Arqām were registered, but they gained many new members among Malay Muslims who worked for the government and or were members of UMNO (the United Malays National Organisation) or the Barisan Nasional. The final phase was marked by negotiations between Jamā'ah Tablīgh and the government, especially in the establishment of the mosque in Sri Petaling as the *markāż* for Malaysia and the Asia Pacific, after the banning of JT in Sabah and Malacca. By involving the government in the administration of the mosque, Jamā'ah Tablīgh attracted many more members. The public no longer saw it as a deviant sect. This dual strategy had implications for JT's success in penetrating the Malay Muslim community where it was able to establish more than 20 *markāż*s in Malaysia and connections to other countries, including Indonesia, Thailand and Singapore.

## The coming of Jamā'ah Tablīgh to Aceh

There are no written accounts of the arrival of *karkūn* in Aceh. During my visits to several sub-districts there, I found that most people did not understand what Jamā'ah Tablīgh was. As far as I could tell, the first Jamā'ah Tablīgh in Aceh were members of a group of *khurūj* from Malaysia in late 1969. Because they were mainly South Asian and not able to speak Indonesian or Acehnese, Malaysians translated their *bayān* (religious sermons) into Indonesian. But there was no response from Muslims in Banda Aceh and the *karkūn* returned to Medan without any new members. My informant told me that the main reason for this was that the group had no understanding of the socio-cultural situation of Muslims in Aceh. They came to Aceh with a mission, without knowing about the daily lives of local Muslims. He also maintained that the use of Arabic words in *bayān* meant that the audience was confused about this group.

A second group of *karkūn* travelled to Aceh in early 1984 during one of their *khurūj* routes in Indonesia. This group was sent via Medan by the Malaysian *markāż*. It included Malays, Africans, Bangladeshi, Indians and Egyptians. The target mosque was Masjid Bayturrahman in Banda Aceh city. After arriving by bus, they visited the mosque, asking permission to do *khurūj* for three days. Unfortunately, the *imam masjid* refused their request and asked them to leave. Then, they visited the mosque at Cot Krueng to formulate a strategy of *da'wa* called *fikir* (hesitation).

The *imām masjid* Cot Krueng, Tgk. Far received the *Jamā'ah* for three days only. He welcomed them as guests without knowing they were Jamā'ah Tablīgh. During this trip, the *karkūn* did not inform the people in Banda Aceh that their mission was associated with the Jamā'ah Tablīgh movement. Nevertheless, during the Friday prayer at Bayturrahman, they invited young Muslims to hear about their mission (again, without telling them about JT). One senior Tablighist told me that he was surprised to find some local Muslims wearing gameez (the robes of an Indian Muslim). He asked them to take a picture of them in front of the mosque. Usually there are many photographers who take pictures of visitors in front of the Bayturrahman mosque. Jamā'ah Tablīgh's arrival in 1984 tended to introduce a new model of Muslim dress to the Acehnese. It commonly recognised that in the Acehnese community, people tend not to dress in Arabian style, instead wearing *sarung* and *baju koko* (traditional Indonesian Muslim clothing). The students who were most interested in this group were from the faculty of *da'wa* of the State Institute of Islamic Studies (IAIN) Ar-Raniry. They were interested in the fashion of *karkūn*. After joining the group, they attended a meeting to perform the *fikir*

(hesitation), when *karkūn* should take into account the current of Muslim life. Both of them were 19 years old. When Tengku Kandar, a *karkūn* who graduated from the IAIN and works as *imām masjid* in Kuala Lumpur, wanted to take a picture of the group, another *karkūn* said that it is better for you to show your picture in the hereafter (*Qiyāmah*) in front of Allah. Tengku Kandar was not able to understand what this meeting was. When he asked, the *karkūn* replied by asking him and his colleagues to join their trip for three days. The students welcomed the suggestion without expressing curiosity about the Islamic organisation.

The group of students from the Islamic university was familiar with Islamic issues. However, they saw the group of *karkūn* as very different in their style of life. According to one of them, they saw in *karkūn* a model of real Islam, which looked like Islam from Middle East, which in turn they saw as the centre of the Islamic world. He told me that he had never met a group of Muslims who had gone overseas to spread the message of Islam. In his words:

> I was impressed by the style of *Tablīghist*. They tended to be low profile and never pushed us directly to do their mission. Firstly we joined their trip, then they asked us to do what they did. I did not know that they were from *Jamā'ah Tablīgh*. Later on, after we spent three days together, they said that we were a part of *Jamā'ah Tablīgh* community. They asked us to revive the life of the mosque in Aceh.

The *karkūn* also conducted *khusūsi* (inviting some respected people) to religious leaders in Banda Aceh city. He approached the head of the Ulama Council of Aceh. Through *ikrām al-muslim* (respect for Muslim), they explained the agenda of Tablīgh. It is said that most religious leaders in Aceh did not reject them, but neither did they give them permission. This indicates that Jamā'ah Tablīgh could be spread in Aceh, even though most Acehnese were still not familiar with the movement.

The five students later become the representatives of Jamā'ah Tablīgh in Aceh. They held many meetings to attract young Muslims to perform Tablīgh rituals, though Tengku Kandar said that he was doing *khurūj* only for three days with students at a senior high school and did not tell the students that they were performing a Jamā'ah Tablīgh ritual. Most of its activities were controlled by a small group at the mosque at Cot Krueng (subsequently destroyed by the tsunami in December 2004). However, during the 1980s this mosque became the *markāż* for *karkūn* in Aceh. The *jamā'ah*s (a number of Tablighists who go out as Islamic missionaries) from Jakarta or outside Indonesia were sent to this mosque as part of *khurūj* in Aceh. They sent their members to remote areas to do *da'wa* as

well. When I interviewed a *karkūn* who had been one of this first generation of *karkūn* in Aceh, he told me that there were many challenges from the Acehnese community. For example, they were not allowed to carry out activities such as *khurūj* and *bayān* in mosques. They invited the *shūra* (the supreme leader in JT) from Jakarta to help the mission in Aceh. In December 1986, the *shūra* visited Aceh to assist their strategy of *da'wa* in the province. Most *karkūn* were happy for his help and developed a new enthusiasm when they met him, especially when he wanted to help them by joining the Acehnese *karkūn* to travel to Aceh for forty days promoting JT's mission. They walked or went by car or bus from one mosque to another. *Karkūn* called this kind of trip across an entire province *ta'āruf* (introduction). The aim was to promote Jamā'ah Tablīgh, not only among ordinary people, but also among the elite in Banda Aceh. One *ustāż* from Jakarta, *ustāż* Makmun, visited local people on foot and was received sympathetically by most Acehnese. When he asked them to come with him, many people accompanied him. According to *karkūn*, *ustāż* Makmun delivered *bayān* on non-political issues. Most of his message was about how to be a good Muslim by increasing submission to Allah, doing *khurūj* and other Jamā'ah Tablīgh activities.

The *shūra* also visited government offices to speak to elites and intellectuals in Banda Aceh. He met the rector of the IAIN Ar-Raniry and Syiah Kuala University in order to promote JT. Many students from both campuses joined and became the pioneers of the movement in Banda Aceh. They also recruited students to join their meetings in Cot Krueng. Informal meetings also took place in the Bayturrahman mosque, as part of general discussions about Islam among young Muslims in Banda Aceh. Ustāż Ridhā, the *amir* of Aceh, was interested in joining the meeting of young students in the mosque hall. He did not know the agenda, but saw that there were students after noon and late prayer (*dhuhur* and *'ashar*) who always sat together in a circle. He attended one of the meetings and committed himself to *da'wa* activity in Banda Aceh. It is also said that most students wanted him to become a *karkūn*, because he was related to the head of the Indonesian Ulama Council. If *ustāż* Ridhā became a Jamā'ah Tablīgh member, it would be easier to approach the head of MUI of Aceh. However, that strategy was not successful.

It could be said that younger people were attracted to Jamā'ah Tablīgh as a part of their seeking "real Islam" –even if they did not understand that this made them part of a transnational Islamic movement. This led them to ask more *jamā'ah* from Medan to teach them about "real Islam". Sometimes, these students also travelled to Medan or abroad to do *khurūj*. According to one, only when he travelled did he finally learn the name and

the features of the movement. He suddenly realised that his trip to Medan was part of a Jamā'ah Tablīgh program. In Medan, he learned about the JT network in Southeast Asia. The first group who went on a 40-day *khurūj* was a *jamā'ah* of young *karkūn* for Banda Aceh who went from Medan to Yogyakarta by bus. According to my informant, the members of this group included *ustāż* Ridhā, *ustāż* Darwan and *ustāż* Ibrahim. They were the first *jamā'ah* from Aceh to go on *khurūj* outside the state. On *khurūj* they learned about the organisational system of Jamā'ah Tablīgh. They brought the spirit of JT to Banda Aceh. Finally, this group became the senior *karkūn* in Aceh and remains so today.

From this generation, then, I learned about the promotion of Jamā'ah Tablīgh in Banda Aceh through *khurūj* in Aceh. Senior and junior high school students conducted *khurūj* only on Sundays. From the *markāż* they were then coordinated by Tengku Kandar to take one-day journeys. Mostly these trips were around Banda Aceh city, because they had to go to school on Monday. Tengku Kandar told me that he used his bicycle to coordinate fellow Tablighists. By doing this, he attracted students to go with him to do *da'wa* on Saturdays. He insisted that he would ask young students to tell others about their activity by saying that this was only way to mark the holiday.

He said that the people around the city stared at them: the sight of students wearing gameez, riding bicycles, carrying kitchen equipment was strange to the people of Banda Aceh. At first they travelled around their own neighbourhoods. They conducted the *malam markāż* every Saturday night. It was easy for other students to enrol in the Cot Krueng *markāż* group. One ex-student from a poor family told me that he wanted to join because the food was free, even though he did not want to eat in the *jamā'ah* way (3 or 4 *karkūns* eating from a single big plate).

In Banda Aceh, most students join some organisations or engage in extra-curricular activities that have nothing to do with their schools or universities. These students are from *kampong*s (village) around Aceh, who come to Banda Aceh to study. This city is a *kota pelajar* (city of students) for young Acehnese, who are very proud if they were able to study there. Their parents send them to Banda Aceh to study for several years, from senior high school to university. On their departure from the kampong, their parents give them only a sack of rice and some pocket money. Bringing rice is very important because the students can cook it at their *kosk* (rented rooms or hostels) at lunch and dinner times. They buy other food from the *warung* (traditional restaurant), although poor students will cook at the *kosk*. Parents who can afford it rent houses for their children, while poor students rent rooms, which they share with friends

from the same kampongs or of the same status. Most students use bicycles while studying at the schools or universities, creating a shared atmosphere among young Acehnese in the city, even those from different backgrounds. The places in which they live are known as *kos-kosan*, the most famous being Darussalam near the two campuses (UNSYIAH and IAIN).

There are two state universities in Banda Aceh: Syiah Kuala University (UNSYIAH, Universitas Syiah Kuala) which offers secular education and the State Institute of Islamic Studies (IAIN) Ar-Raniry, the base for religious studies. These campuses are both situated in the sub-district of Darussalam. Students from other parts of Banda Aceh may go to Darussalam, which means they are studying either at UNSYIAH or IAIN. There are also some private universities on the outskirts of Banda Aceh: UNIDA (Iskandar Muda University), UNMUHA (Muhammadiyah University), and PTSM (Serambi Mekkah University).

Students doing secular or religious studies may join together in a single off-campus organisation, especially in the mosque of Bayturrahman. But there are many other student organisations, including HMI (Islamic University Student Association), PII (Indonesian Muslim Students), PMII (Indonesia Islamic Students Movement) and Iskada (Student Islamic Missionary Union). As the activities of these organisations take place off campus, they all try to recruit new members from among the first year students of all campuses. They induct new members by running short training sessions to teach them the values of their organisation. PII and Iskada are especially popular among students in Banda Aceh. The former was mainly concerned with opposing the Indonesian government's implementation of Pancasila (the five pillars of Indonesia ideology) as the foundation of the state. In 1984, the government decreed that all organisations in Indonesia must be based on Pancasila. In Banda Aceh, they also conducted protests against the government. At the same time, most students who joined the PII also become members of Iskada. This organisation trained students to become *da'ī* (Islamic preachers) in Banda Aceh. This group mainly targeted students in senior high schools. Members of Iskada also became members of PII when they went into university at IAIN or UNSYIAH.

Senior members of Iskada required to implement short training courses for junior members. Because the organisation was centred on the mosque, all members went there regularly to obtain up-to-date information. Younger students like Tengku Hadi, his friend and Tengku Kandar, who were members of Iskada or PII, came to know of Jamā'ah Tablīgh at the mosque. During his studies at IAIN, Tengku Kandar was confused about what constituted real Islamic values. He then made Tengku Hadi his friend

in order to find "true Islam" in Banda Aceh. During this *khurūj,* they met other young students at Bayturrahman and began to play a major role in the discussion. At the mosque, many students were also discussing current issues. Thus, when Tengku Hadi and Tengku Kandar joined JT, they would invite other students to join the *da'wa* group. If Iskada had instilled in them the spirit of *da'wa* in theory, Tablīgh provided them with practical guidance on how to perform it.

Suffice it to say that in the first phase of Jamā'ah Tablīgh in Aceh, the organisation was dominated by students. Because of their studies, they did not start the ritual on Thursday nights, but instead invited their friends to the *markāż* on Saturday nights.

The development of Jamā'ah Tablīgh did not go smoothly because Muslims in Aceh still opposed the movement. Wherever they performed *khurūj*, local people accused them of offering new interpretations of Islam. The challenge arose because the JT members were very young. In Aceh, the only people who can teach or ask people to do good things according to Islamic teaching are *tengku* who have graduated from *dayah* (an Islamic traditional institution that produce ulama in Aceh). One *karkūn* told me that when he was in northern Aceh doing *khurūj*, local ulama threw cow dung at them. However, this young *karkūn* was trained not to seek revenge or to respond negatively to local people. When the *tengku* threw the cow dung, this *karkūn* simply recited "*astaghfirullāh"* (I seek forgiveness from Allah).

The hostility was also a result of the lack of support for Jamā'ah Tablīgh from MUI and well-respected ulama in Banda Aceh. *Karkūn* there, with the support of *shūra* of Jakarta, attempted to overcome this opposition by visiting the ulama and introducing Jamā'ah Tablīgh to them; the ulama responded well to the mission. The *karkūn* approached the ulama as a means of showing *ikrām al-muslim* (respect for Muslims) which was seen as an appropriate way to gain more followers in Aceh. As mentioned above, the first generation of *karkūn* in Aceh were students who had no religious authority, even though they were studying at an Islamic university. They also faced the negative reaction of traditional ulama in *dayah*.[17]

While there were no positive signals from the ulama, the *karkūn* with strong support from *markāż* Kebon Jeruk (Jakarta) still played an important role in promoting *Jamā'ah Tablīgh* in Aceh. When they had finished their studies, they went out for *khurūj* in what *karkūn* call IPB

[17] In Padang, this institution is called *surau*, while in Java it is named *pesantren.* On this Islamic education see generally (Azra, 2003).

(India, Pakistan and Bangladesh) or elsewhere overseas. In this context, the *markāż* always sends *Jamā'ah* to help *karkūn* in Aceh. During my field work, most of these young *karkūn* had become senior *karkūn* in Banda Aceh, although the pioneers of JT were no longer there. This indicates that the process of recruitment had been successful, since the total number of JT members in Aceh by then exceeded ten thousand. Acehnese *karkūn* now play a major role in maintaining good relationships with the *markāż* in Indonesia (Kebun Jeruk), Malaysia (Sri Petaling) and India (Nizamuddin).

## Conclusion

This chapter has presented the history of Jamā'ah Tablîgh and its coming to Southeast Asia, and the current situation of the movement in Kuala Lumpur and Aceh, especially relating to the development of Islam in Southeast Asia. The reason why Jamā'ah Tablīgh is received widely not only by Muslim communities in India, but also in Southeast Asia and other parts of the world is because it provides a path to promoting the spirit of mysticism over the shariah. Thus, it is a challenge in communities where shariah is controlled by the government or religious leaders, such as in Banda Aceh in the 1980s when the Tablighists first came. We might say that the victory of shariah amounts to the establishment of an Islamic state and the implementation of Islamic law, one of the goals of Islamic fundamentalism in many parts of the Muslim world. However, this version of fundamentalism derives from a Christian-like interpretation of what it means to be fundamentalist. A movement such as Jamā'ah Tablīgh may also be fundamentalist, in the sense of promoting a "return" to the basic texts but at the same time going beyond the authority of shariah-oriented Islam. Jamā'ah Tablīgh offers the path to a position of three *haqīqah*s (absolute, determined and unitary realities) by following a mystical life without neglecting the shariah ("street").

Thus, when Jamā'ah Tablīgh is challenged or banned, it does not respond in a "shariah way" by saying "we are right and you are completely wrong". Instead, the movement adopts a strategy of increasing contact with those opposed to their mission. It is understandable that members of JT yielded their "authority" to the government in administering the mosque in Sri Petaling. When a *da'wa* movement uses the strategy of mystical life, it is in a good position in the sense that its members cannot be stopped by the passive action of those opposed to them. As we have seen, in Malaysia Jama'ah Tablīgh did not oppose the ruler or even respond to the charge of deviant teaching. Rather they pursued a strategy

they call the *haqīqah* (illuminative), as described in the previous chapter, that starts by interconnecting the three basic foundations of Islam towards God by providing a path.

To sum up this chapter, I first argued that the emergence of Jamā'ah Tablīgh was a response to both local and international Islam. By local Islam, I mean the encounter with a process of Hindu-isation in India. As a founder, Mawlana Ilyās tried to make Islam a contested religion in his society by combining two methods: *da'wa* and Sufism. In international Islam, he sought to gain support for reviving Muslim society in part to address the decline of the Islamic caliphate. These efforts can be understood as a key to the transnationalisation of Jamā'ah Tablīgh. It is important to note that the movement did not promote a new interpretation of Islam, but rather focused on the implementation of the spirit of the Prophet and the *sahabat* in Muslim society, blending *'aqīdah* (theology), shariah (street), and *ma 'rīfah* (gnosis).

The expansion of JT in Southeast Asia was also linked to local Malay processes of negotiating identity and reconstructing Islam. This movement, originally from India and coloured by South Asian culture, has influenced Muslim culture in Malaysia, a country with three main ethnic groups. As result, Jamā'ah Tablīgh's arrival resulted in a marriage of Indian Islamic and Malay Islamic culture. After doing field work and travelling throughout Malaysia, I can say that JT has contributed to the formation of a new image of Islam and Muslims in the country. The organisation has moved very smoothly from a Sufist *da'wa* movement to providing a new model of government in Malaysia. As shown in subsequent chapters, members come not only from the lower but also from the middle classes.

In the case of Aceh, Jamā'ah Tablīgh, as a product of "local" and "international" Islam did not succeed in blending with Acehnese Islam, which is controlled by traditional ulama in *dayah*. Thus, the early conflict between this movement and traditional ulama was a conflict between authority and charisma. When JT first entered the province, many of the special jobs of traditional ulama were lost,[18] because the members of Jamā'ah Tablīgh did not pay attention to the hierarchy in their *da'wa*

[18] In Acehnese society, traditional ulama play a major role in many facets of social life such as *slametan*, weekly *pengajian*, funeral rituals, reading the Qur'an in cemeteries, leaders of *kenduri* (traditional feasts), etc. This does not include their job as special advisors to political parties, the army, *bupati* (local government officials), and people who need their spiritual power. Mostly ulama are paid for their role in such activities. Thus, in Aceh traditional ulama can be called the guardians of society (see Amiruddin, 2003, Saby, 1995, Mukti, 1970).

activity. That is why many traditional ulama did not accept the movement as part of local Acehnese Islam. Even today in areas where Islam is controlled by local ulama, it is not easy for the movement to carry out *da'wa* activities. The opposition to Jamā'ah Tablīgh is not political in the sense that it was in Sabah and Malacca in Malaysia; rather, in Aceh, people tend to see the movement as practicing deviant teaching. Hence, recruiting for members is focused in urban areas and among the middle class. This chapter shows how the early history of Jamā'ah Tablīgh is not a product of religious ideas coming from ulama, but rather from young intellectual Muslims who see the Tablighist life style as a Middle Eastern Islam.

Finally, there is a tension between religion as a local and an international force. Even when they adhere to the same teaching, there are conflicts among religious followers over religious practice. In Aceh, many argue that Islam comes from Gujarat (India). However, the coming of "Islam as product" through Jamā'ah Tablīgh is not "real Islam" as understood by traditional ulama. This has led to conflict between those who join the movement and those who remain loyal to the local ulama. The Malaysian case indicates that Islam as a product of South Asia was successful because there was a link between the history of Indian people in the country and the original aims of Jamā'ah Tablīgh in Malaysia, which was to unify Indian Muslims.

The next chapter is a discussion of the *markāż* (headquarters) of JT in Malaysia which also serves as the Asia-Pacific *markāż* for Jamā'ah Tablīgh. In describing the organisational dynamics of JT in Malaysia, I discuss the ways in which religion is produced, constructed and imagined under the umbrella of this particular religious movement.

# CHAPTER THREE

# THE NATIONAL *MARKĀŻ*

## Introduction

In this chapter I discuss the headquarters of Jamā'ah Tablīgh in Malaysia, located in Sri Petaling, a suburb of Kuala Lumpur. The *markāż* is the central religious authority for all Tablighists in Malaysia. In Islam, religious authority plays an important role in mobilising people for worship. It can be said that all activities are at once practical and religiously oriented, but they must be carried out in and from the mosque. In this chapter, I report on the role of a mosque in establishing religious experiences within the Jamā'ah Tablīgh in an organisational system. The chapter highlights the state of faith among *karkūn* when they submit themselves to Allah at the *markāż*. In addition, this study shows the way of Tablighist return to the tradition of the Prophet of Muhammad. It explains that from a mosque, the Prophet controlled his society and entrusted his *sahabat* to spread the words of *lā ilā ha illā Allāh*. It also indicates the spirit that leads many Tablighists to donate their time, selves and money to the path of Allah.

In this chapter, I argue that Jamā'ah Tablīgh has a system of organisation that has not been adequately described by scholars (Khan 1986; Sikand 2002; Masud 2000; Troll 1985; Kepel 2000; Aziz 2004). When I started my fieldwork, I met *ustāż* Sulaiman, a senior *karkūn* who had been involved in Jamā'ah Tablīgh for many years. When I met him, in early November 2006, he gave me a copy of his book entitled *Menuju Jalan Rasulullah SAW: Pengenalan Awal Jamā'ah Tablīgh* (Towards the Path of the Prophet's Ways: An Introduction to Jamā'ah Tablīgh), in which he describes the organisational structure of Jamā'ah Tablīgh as follows: "The *Jamā'ah* has no general guidance framework like other organisations. The foundation of the *Jamā'ah* are the Qur'an and Sunnah ... This organisation does not have a flag as an organisational symbol, or a logo or slogans" (Sulaiman, 2006, my translation).

In attempting to characterise this movement, I do not use terms such as "modernist" or "fundamentalist" because, as already pointed out, these

terms are always influenced by external standards of interpretation. The term "Islamic fundamentalist" has currently been superseded by others, including "Islamic movement", "political Islam", "Islamic activism", "Islamic revivalism" or "resurgence", and "new religious politics" (Bayat, 2005: 893).[1] As Nagata writes of Malaysia, "applying the fundamentalist lens to a specific set of movements, experiments, and discourses in Malaysia since 1970 provides an apercu of the changing uses of religious epithets both about and by Muslims, in changing political and social circumstances, and the responses to these by non-Muslims" (Nagata, 2001: 489). It is also interesting to note that fundamentalist movements are involved in a sort of cultural production. As Appleby (2002: 500) notes "fundamentalists organize for cultural power, political takeover, or militancy conquest". This chapter asks whether Jamā'ah Tablīgh mobilises "cultural power" among its members when organising and administering its central religious activities – known as *da'wa* (missionary activity).

During my fieldwork I observed that in striving to ensure the success of its missionary activities Jamā'ah Tablīgh is tightly organised. Is this organisation culturally or religiously neutral, or is it linked to the religious experiences of its members? What kind of society do its members wish to implement? What social networks have been formed among JT members in Southeast Asia? To answer these questions, I focus on the setting of and activity in the *markāż*. This is because I want to know about the level of religious experiences among *karkūn* when they donate their time, their selves and their funds to the path of Allah. It is interesting to investigate the internal situation of this movement as an Islamic organisation that returns to the Qur'an and Sunnah. This ethnographic study helps us to understand the reasons why Islamic movements that return to original texts tend not to use violence.

In fact, the situation of the *markāż* is not uncommon in Islam and in other world religions, particularly in the modern period. In the early period of Islam, all religious and social activities were centred in a mosque. The Prophet would invite his fellows to attend the mosque for worship and religious discussion. In Buddhist communities, many monks live in the temple, and go out in the morning to ask for help from ordinary people. When I was in Thailand, I saw that the temple is a centre for monks to organise their activities and for ordinary people to practice religious worship or seclusion. They might stay at the temple for forty days. The same is true for Christian communities, where priests use the church as their home base for religious activities. However, with modernisation,

[1] See also Hassan (2000:69-107); Esposito (ed.) (1997).

authority moves from the religious to the public arena. Mosques, churches and temples then play major roles as centres for ritual.

In his study of multinational churches in North and Latin American, Nelson maintains that "religious organizations were really the first multinationals, and by almost any measure, many are still among the largest. All major world religions at one time or another have expanded by moving across national and cultural boundaries, and many, if not most, still compete worldwide" (Nelson, 1993: 655). Giddens says that "in modern industrial society, however, religion has become established in separate, often bureaucratic, organizations, and so sociologists focus on the organization through which religion must operate in order to survive" (Giddens, 2006: 535). Thus, looking very closely at religious places (churches, mosques and temples) is important for investigating the transmission of religious authority and the distribution of power among religious followers.

In Islam, for example, the mosque is not only for worshipping Allah but is also the house of Allah (*bayt Allāh*), as well as a place for social activities. That is to say that as *bayt Allāh*, the mosque does not need the people, but the people need *bayt Allāh*. Their interest is to be a part of a caravan by which to enter paradise through good conduct in this world. Thus, the mosque is part of the path to paradise.

The Jamā'ah Tablīgh case is interesting to be analysed from this point of view, to see how it mobilises people to live in a mosque. It is widely argued that the lifestyle of Sufists is more isolated from the public arena. Sufis often stay in their house in order to remain *insān kamil* (perfect men). Many people visit them even after their death to seek *barakāt* (blessing) and guidance in their spiritual lives (Jamhari, 2000; Chambert-Loir and Guillot, 2007). It would not be incorrect to say then that the mosque is not part of mystical life in Islam, because mosques are part of the public arena, while Sufi life is not.

However, in Jamā'ah Tablīgh, the mosque binds its members for the long term. It creates the organisational system and distributes power and authority from the highest level (international headquarters) to the national *markāż*, down to the *mohalla* (the lowest territorial unit). Some Islamic student organisations such as KAMMI (the Indonesian Muslim Student Action Union), which have missionary objectives, use campuses and mosques as the basic units of organisation (Damanik, 2003). Kraince writes: "Since KAMMI's base support was consolidated out of the established network of campus mosque ... it benefited from a previously established community, yet also inherited some of its confinement. The campus network, although considered conservative by most measures,

represents a very different community than that of the rightist Islamic groups ...". According to this movement, "mosque students do not merely address spirituality, they also implement *reformasi* in accordance with the guidance of Islamic ..." (Kraince, 2000: 9-10).

The following section examines Jamā'ah Tablīgh in Sri Petaling as a well organised Islamic movement. It describes the situation in the *markāż* and the role it plays in organising the activities of all *karkūn* within a given – in this case, national – territory. Jamā'ah Tablīgh aims always to have a *markāż*, most of which are based a mosque for each level of territorial organisation. At the highest level is the international *markāż* in Nizamuddin, India. Below that are the national *markāż*, the state or regional *markāż* and the *halaqah* (local *markāż*), all of which are mosque-based. During my field work, I never saw *karkūn* organising their activities (*bayān, malam markāż, khurūj, jorh*) other than in a mosque. In this section, I describe my experience of being a *karkūn* in the Sri Petaling national *markāż*.

## The Sri Petaling *markāż*

The Sri Petaling headquarters is located near the city of Sri Petaling (*Bandar Sri Petaling*). To reach the *markāż*, I took a train from Masjid Jamek station in central Kuala Lumpur to Sri Petaling station. At the last station, I took a taxi or sometimes walked with other *karkūn* to the mosque. Most taxi drivers know that anyone wearing a gameez around the train station is on his way to Sri Petaling mosque. So, for a newcomer, it is easy to find the *markāż*. Those arriving by plane might take the shuttle bus from Kuala Lumpur International Airport Express to KL Central train station, or travel by taxi. It is widely known in Kuala Lumpur that Sri Petaling is the centre of Jamā'ah Tablīgh. On the way to the *markāż* I saw a Carrefour (French supermarket), Chinese markets and several Indian restaurants. The Malay market was the only place where they served Malay food. The Malay restaurants were opened from 11 a.m. until 12.00 p.m., while the Indian restaurants were opened 24 hours.

The Sri Petaling *markāż* has two functions. The first is as the national *markāż* which controls all state *markāż* in Malaysia.[2] All of these *markāż*

[2] There are more than twenty state *markāż* in Malaysia including: *markāż* Batupahat and Sinaran Baru in Johor Baru, *markāż* Malacca, *markāż* Rahang, *markāż* Ipoh, and *markāż* Taiping in Perak, *markāż* Penanti in Pulau Penang state, *markāż* Alor Setar and Sungai Petani in Kedah, *markāż* Perlis, *markāż* Kuantan for Pahang state; *markāż* Kota Baru for Kelantan, and *markāż* Kebang Bujok for

must work under the Sri Petaling *markāż*. The relationship between the national and the state *markāż* is activated under certain circumstances. The main tasks of Sri Petaling in relation to the state *markāż* are to organise *khurūj* (going out) and to conduct *markāż* programs (*ijtimā'ī*). *Karkūn* who want to travel to IPB (India, Pakistan and Bangladesh) or elsewhere overseas, must register at the *halaqah* (local headquarters), the state *markāż*, and finally at Sri Petaling. At the same time, the Sri Petaling *markāż* also organises overseas *karkūn* wishing to conduct *khurūj* in Malaysia. Sri Petaling asks the state *markāż* or *halaqah* if they will receive the *jamā'ah* in their territory. Thus, every *karkūn* who arrives in Malaysia must also register at Sri Petaling. Sometimes, Nizamuddin *markāż* informs Sri Petaling of the arrival of foreign *jamā'ah* one or two months before their arrival. This is to avoid duplicating *jamā'ah* in a single area and to ensure security in the target area. When this information is received, the *jamā'ah tasykīl* (administrative staff at *markāż*) announce their coming as *takaza* (a request) to *halaqah* or *mohalla*.[3] The state *markāż* will take this request into account when holding a *mushāwarah* (meeting). However, incoming *karkūn* may choose which state they prefer by informing Sri Petaling, which will then contact the local *karkūn* to pick them up at the mosque, as discussed below.

Another aspect of this relationship is the validation of state *markāż* programs. The Sri Petaling *markāż* monitor *ijtimā'ī* (public activities) at each state *markāż*. Sri Petaling must be informed, for example, about any obstacle to missionary activities. To achieve this goal, the state *markāż* usually presents a *karguzari* (report of *da'wa* activities) during *jorh* (regional meeting) gatherings. All problems that occur in the state *markāż* are, therefore, discussed by *shūra* and other senior *karkūn* in Sri Petaling. Other problems, such as the increasing number of Muslim converts to other religions or a decrease in Muslim missionaries in an area, are forwarded to the international *markāż* at Nizamuddin. The response might be to send more *jamā'ah khurūj* to an area.

Apart from acting as Jamā'ah Tablīgh's national headquarters in Malaysia, Sri Petaling is also the state *markāż* for Selangor and Kuala Lumpur. As such, it works to increase the number of members from these states being sent out on JT tours to other *markāż* in Malaysia or overseas. While in the field I had the impression that the *markāż* was also a transit port for groups from Indonesia or Singapore travelling to or returning from

---

Kuala Terengganu. There are also *markāż* in Sabah and Kota Kinabalu including Lahat Dato, Tawon, Limbang, Kucing, Miri, and Sibu.

[3] *Mohalla* is a term to describe a neighborhood or locality in the cities and towns of Central and South Asia

IPB or elsewhere. It was therefore very busy with the administration of the *mosque*, sending *jamā'ah,* receiving and managing foreign *karkūn*, organising madrasah for young *karkūn*, and coordinating with other state *markāż*.

As the state headquarters for Tablighists in Kuala Lumpur, the *markāż* holds gatherings called *malam markāż* every Saturday night. The mosque is also used for meetings of Tablighists from Kuala Lumpur every Wednesday night. They also conduct monthly meetings, in the third week of each month and an annual meeting for Tablighists in Kuala Lumpur. Besides this, the *markāż* organises Tablīghist tours (*khurūj*) of 40 days and four months, and the *bayān hidāyah*, a religious sermon delivered before the departure. Finally, the mosque is a target for returning *karkūn* who are required to deliver *karguzari* (reports) and, before they return to their *halaqah*, the *markāż* briefs them by means of a *bayān tangguh* (a religious sermon after such activities).

Historically, the *markāż* in Sri Petaling was established when *karkūn* started the development of a national headquarters for Malaysia. Before this, the Malay *karkūn* had their *markāż* at the Indian mosque in the Masjid Jamek market in central Kuala Lumpur. In the early 1990s, the mosque was established with donations which, I suspect, came not only from Malaysian *karkūn*, but also from foreign *famā'ah*. The aim was to create a centre of JT, not only for Malaysia, but also for the whole Asia-Pacific region. This was announced in the media just a few days after it was banned in Malacca by MAIM (Islamic Religious Council of Malacca) in 1992. The members worked without pay. It was reported that the total budget for the mosque was RM3,000.000 and it was finished in three years. However, because the Malaysian constitution requires that every mosque in the country should be under the control of the state, JAWI (the Islamic Religious Department of Federal Territory) took over the administration of the mosque. As a result, staff of the mosque including the imam and the board were appointed by JAWI. However, because some staff were also *karkūn*, the mosque remained effectively under Jamā'ah Tablīgh control.

Reportedly, since the banning of JT in Sabah and Malacca in 1992, the central government has taken a neutral position, but still "keeps an eye" on the movement. However, after the move to Sri Petaling the close association between Jamā'ah Tablīgh and India declined, since Sri Petaling is managed by Malay Muslims. I was told that before the move, Jamā'ah Tablīgh activities took place at the Indian mosque and the Abdurrahman mosque of the University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur. It seems that the former was for Indian Tablighists, while the latter was for

young Malay Tablighists. Moving the *markāż* had an impact on the changing of Tabligh identity in Kuala Lumpur and Selangor. During my fieldwork, the administrative staff of Masjid India consisted mainly of Indian Muslims, able to speak Tamil, Urdu, English and Malay. The staff told me that this mosque is used mainly by Indian Muslims. Even now, sermons are delivered in Tamil. By contrast, the administration of *markāż* Sri Petaling is dominated by Malay Muslims with only a small number of Indians.

Moving the *markāż* to Sri Petaling also served to lessen the negative image of Jamā'ah Tablīgh. It was widely recognised that the Indian mosque was used for criminal activities, because of its location near the Masjid Jamek market. Most young Malays joined Jamā'ah Tablīgh not because of their intention to do *da'wa*, but due to their drug addiction. I was informed that young Malay Muslims slept in the mosque when they had problems with drugs. Thus, the image of the mosque among local people was negative. Moving the *markāż* from Masjid India to Masjid Sri Petaling was a strategy to decrease the negative image of Tablighists in Kuala Lumpur.

As the state, national, and Asia Pacific headquarters of Jamā'ah Tablīgh, the Sri Petaling *markāż* can accommodate more than 10,000 people in the mosque. It is sometimes called "the two hundred toilets" mosque by Tablighists and local people. During *malam markāż,* the *markāż* is visited by more than 4,000 JT members from Kuala Lumpur and Selangor. This does not include the *karkūn* who live in the mosque as students, *khidmat*, *shūra* or senior Tablighist.[4] In the following section, I explore the setting of *markāż* based on my ethnographic studies at the mosque.

## The Setting

The *markāż* building contains places for prayer, sleeping, cooking, toilets and stores. In this it is similar to other buildings, such as Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) (Lukens-Bull, 2005; Horikoshi, 1987). However, the purpose of the *markāż* is to organise missionary activity among the Tablighist, while the purpose of *pesantren* is to produce religious scholars (ulama) (Bruinessen, 1999; Dhofier, 1994: Azra, 2003c). This setting also differs from Darul Arqam, which is a more village-based

[4]Of these concepts, see the section below.

organisation.[5] Most radical or fundamentalist Islamic movements have a clandestine organisation (Dekmejian, 1985; Ibrahim, 1982, 1980). They begin their missions underground and distribute ideas using silent methods. Jamā'ah Tablīgh, in contrast, by making a mosque the centre of its activity, is designed to allow public access.

Photo 3. The photo was taken from the East of the main hall prayer during noon prayer (Author, 2007)

### *The main hall for prayer*

One night I was unwell, so I slept in a corner of the mosque hall. At 1.15 a.m I had a fever and was vomiting, so at 1.30 a.m. I thought to move to the main hall, as this was a better place to sleep. Suddenly, two young *karkūn* with sticks woke me up saying there was no sleeping in this hall. They were security guards who monitored the mosque after midnight. Given this situation, I said: "I am sorry, I am sick, could you tell me where there is a place where I can sleep in this mosque?" One *karkūn* replied: "Yes, you could move to a room where there is a carpet and it will be comfortable for you!" They told me that I should never sleep in the main hall of the mosque.

Later, I learned that the main hall is designed only as a place of prayer. For Muslims, the place for the prayer must be free of *najis* (dirt). The main hall is used for praying, listening to *bayān* and *mużākarah*, and for

[5] Historically the Darul Arqam movement was centred in Sungai Penchala, an area in Kuala Lumpur. After it was banned in 1994, it moved to Seremban, where the leader Ashaari Muhammad began their *da'wa* mission and changed the name of the organisation to Rufaqa (Nagata, 2004; Hamid, 2004; Seng, 2005; Abdullah, 1992, and Salleh, 1994).

meetings. During prayer times, *karkūn* enter the hall. There is a podium which used to be a place for *khātib* (a person who delivered *khutbah* in Jum'ah prayer), at the back of which there is a sound system. In a wall of the hall there is a place for the Qur'an, which *karkūn* read during free time. Thus, this hall is designed to be a special place for the main Muslim ritual, prayer. Because of this, it is prohibited to sleep there, because when someone sleeps at night, their hand could be "somewhere". Then, his hand could touch the floor, which leads to *najis*. Or, if someone sleeps and has a dream, his sperm could end up on the floor of the main hall.

### *The sleeping hall*

Behind the main hall are two halls for sleeping. For local *karkūn*, this place is like a big bedroom, especially during *malam markāż* when all *karkūn* stay at the mosque. In this hall, *karkūn* sleep in prayer lines. They might sleep with their friends or other *karkūn* whom they met in the mosque. Because of these lines, when we enter the mosque from the south side, the room looks like a military barracks. During prayer times, no one is allowed to sleep in the hall; they leave their belongings and perform their prayers in the main hall. Behind the sleeping hall, there are more than fifteen toilets. In this room, I saw many cakes of soap and *miswak*s (twigs used to clean teeth).

Photo 4. The sleeping hall from south side of the main hall of prayer (Author, 2007)

There is also another sleeping room in the mosque where only special *karkūn*, such as administrative staff, *khidmat* (service at *markāż*), and

senior *karkūn* sleep. In addition, this room is used by *karkūn* who devote their lives entirely to missionary activities. There is a carpet and fan, as well as a connection to the bathroom. I assume that not every *karkūn* knows about this place. When I was not allowed to sleep in the main hall, the security guards told me that I could sleep in this room. Thus, there is a hierarchy of resting places corresponding to the status and responsibility of *karkūn* in the *markāż*.

### *Bedroom for foreign karkūn*

On the right side of the mosque, there is a building designed for foreign *jamā'ah*. Here, there are beds and bathrooms. During my fieldwork I saw many South Asian faces: Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi. This room was always closed and others were prohibited from entering. I assumed that it was only for *mawlana* (Tablighist ulama) who come from IPB. As Asia Pacific headquarters, the Sri Petaling received *mawlana* from the international *markāż* in Nizamuddin, transiting in Sri Petaling before their onward travel in Southeast Asia and Australia. In addition, they have programs at Sri Petaling or attend *jorh* in the *markāż*.[6]

Not every foreign *jamā'ah* is allowed to use this room. *Jamā'ah* from Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand and Brunei rest on the second floor of the mosque, so the room was not for Southeast Asian *karkūn*s. All this is arranged by the *istiqbāl* section who register all visitors to the mosque. They directed the "Indian faces" to the room and Southeast Asians to the second floor, where there are no beds or bathrooms. The facilities are like those for *karkūn*. They may sleep in the mosque for three days, as it is a Muslim tradition to welcome a guest for three days. The second floor is sometimes used by *karkūn* in transit to and from IPB. The *jamā'ah* from Indonesia usually join those from Malaysia, and leave Malaysia together. When they arrive in Kuala Lumpur, *karkūn* in Sri Petaling handle visas and ticketing. Usually they use the second floor for two or three days.

### *The kitchen*

The kitchen is one hundred metres from the main building, close to the madrasah where young *karkūn* memorise the Qur'an and study Islam

[6] During my fieldwork, the term *jamā'ah foreign* was widely used for *karkūn* from overseas. They were treated as guests in *markāż*. Every *karkūn* would understand if someone mentioned the term *jamā'ah foreign*.

(*dirāsah islāmiyyah*). The kitchen has three sections. The first is a food court where *karkūn* eat breakfast, lunch and dinner. In this room, there are many sets of *ta'ām* (large plates) and glasses. Beside this is the main kitchen where *karkūn* cook for all the *karkūn* in the *markāż*. It is a rule that guests may eat without paying, for up to three days. To the left of the food court and main kitchen, there is a bedroom for the *karkūn* on cooking duty. In this room, there are a lot of clothes and luggage, indicating that *karkūn*s who perform cooking duties come from many places in Kuala Lumpur and other states in Malaysia. In this small room, *karkūn* sleep during their period of voluntary service in the *markāż*.

The kitchen is built far from the mosque, because noise and mess might affect the mosque rituals. When I first came to the mosque, I did not know where the kitchen was. When I went to the kitchen I met a *karkūn* from Sabah, named *ustāż* Mazlan, who had done *khidmat* for the *markāż*. He invited me to take lunch with him and some elderly *karkūn*. The price was RM 6-8 for 3-4 *karkūns*. At meal times, an elder *karkūn* acts as cashier, sitting on a chair, taking money and distributing coupons, which are exchanged for *ta'ām* in the main kitchen area. Those performing *khidmat* do not pay anything, nor do those who devote themselves to long-term *khidmat* at the mosque. Some elderly *karkūn* who had difficulty walking were served by young *karkūn*. I was told that this behaviour was part of *ikrām muslim* (respect for Muslims). They eat in the *khidmat* room and the younger members wash the dishes. When the *karkūn* finish eating, they should clean the *ta'ām* and wash the dishes themselves.

Photo 5. Tablighist shops in the Sri Petaling *Markāż* (Author, 2007)

Food preparation is under the control of an amir, or head chef. He coordinates with *karkūn* what food should be prepared at each mealtime. To do this, *karkūn* who work on a voluntary basis should adhere to the

guidelines for cooking laid down by the cook. Meals must be prepared on time, so as not to affect the rituals and programs of the *markāż*. Time spent preparing food is seen as part of '*ibadah* (worship of Allah). By doing this '*ibadah*, *karkūn* should feel satisfied because others enjoy the food. All this is communicated to them when they first arrive at the *markāż*. Thus, cooking can be seen as part of *karkūn* ritual, as I discuss in more detail in Chapter 7.

## *The Shops*

Regarding the shop, I refer to my field notes recorded after my first visit to the mosque:

> On the right side of the *markāż* field there were shops that sold *karkūn*'s daily needs. However, the *karkūn* who staffed these stores were not Malay Muslims. Most of my conversations were in Malay Indian dialect. A *karkūn* said that he was from India and had been in Malaysia for more than ten years. When I entered the store, I saw they sold gameez, religious books about Jamā'ah Tablīgh, soap, shampoo and Coca Cola. Later, I found that most of the things sold in the store were bought from a large Indian Muslim company in Malaysia named Mydin. Thus they did not supply the things from Malay Muslim or Chinese traders in Kuala Lumpur (field notes 2 January 2007).

In fact, the area surrounding Sri Petaling is dominated by Chinese traders. There are only a few Indian restaurants in the city and these are outside the *markāż*. Visitors of the *markāż* might buy Tablighist accessories very cheaply. However, most things in the store can be found in the Masjid Jamek, the Indian Muslim dominated area. By contrast, when I travelled to Kelantan, a state where Islamic Law was being implemented, Tablighist needs were sold by Malay Muslims to non-*karkūn*.

The shops were not as busy as the one in Masjid Jamek because they were open only from morning until late afternoon. Also, during *malam markāż* there was a bazaar where they also sell Tablighists' needs. The Tablighist dress sold in the *markāż* is also available in many other places, meaning that it was becoming more popular among Malay Muslims. An Indian Muslim in his 60s told me the Malay Muslims had started to adopt South Asian fashions in Malaysia, even if they do not welcome other elements of Indian culture. He added, "we do not understand why Malay Muslims in Malaysia discriminate against Indians, but not Indian fashion. They like Indian movies, Indian songs, Indian food and Indian drink, but they do not like us!" In fact, *karkūn* believe that the gameez, which comes

from the Middle East and South Asia, is like the clothing worn by the Prophet.

In sum, the setting of the *markāż* shows that Jamā'ah Tablīgh operates in an area where everything can be found. Those coming to the mosque have no difficulty sleeping, eating, shopping or praying there. The mosque becomes the centre of all of their activities. Other Islamic organisations also use mosques as headquarters, but only for praying and meetings. (Damanik, 2003; Kuntowijoyo, 2001; Zada, 2002). For Jamā'ah Tablīgh, the mosque is the centre of all aspects of the missionary project. The setting is like a spider's web with the surrounding areas providing full support for JT rituals. While I was in the field, I found no buildings in the area not used for Jamā'ah Tablīgh activities. The large car park around the main building is used by those attending the *malam markāż* and *jorh*. I was surprised to see cars during *malam markāż*, because I had thought that JT members were from lower income groups in Kuala Lumpur. The large of number of cars tells us that many *karkūn* come from wealthier backgrounds.

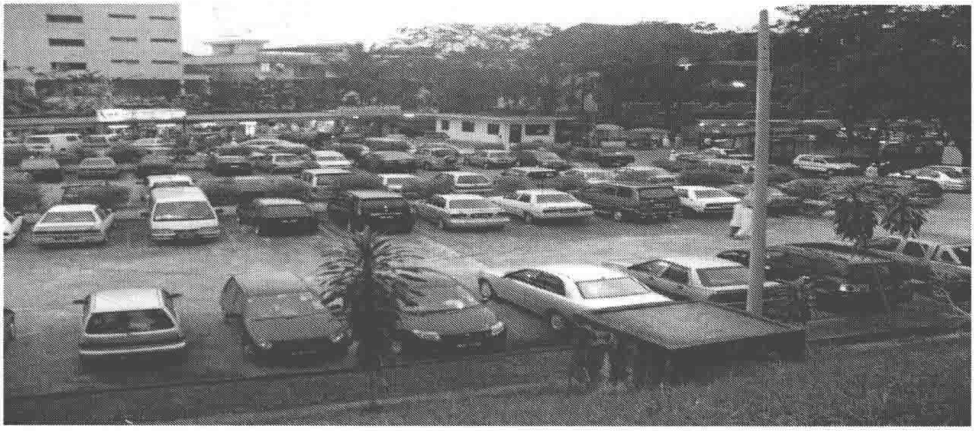


Photo 6. The area of car park from East side of the *markāż* (Author, 2007)

Diagram 1 shows the mosque as the centre of a variety of supporting elements. All theses places have come to symbolise the idea of submission to Allah. The upkeep of the facilities is required as *khidmat* for the *markāż*, which involves a sacrifice of time. Donating funds for food is also seen as a sacrifice. All of the *markāż* activities support the aims of Jamā'ah Tablīgh, which is to send out groups for *khurūj* all around the world. The maintenance of the facility therefore does not belong to a

single group of *karkūn*. Everyone who comes to and leaves the *markāż* contributes to making this facility part of their mission in this world.

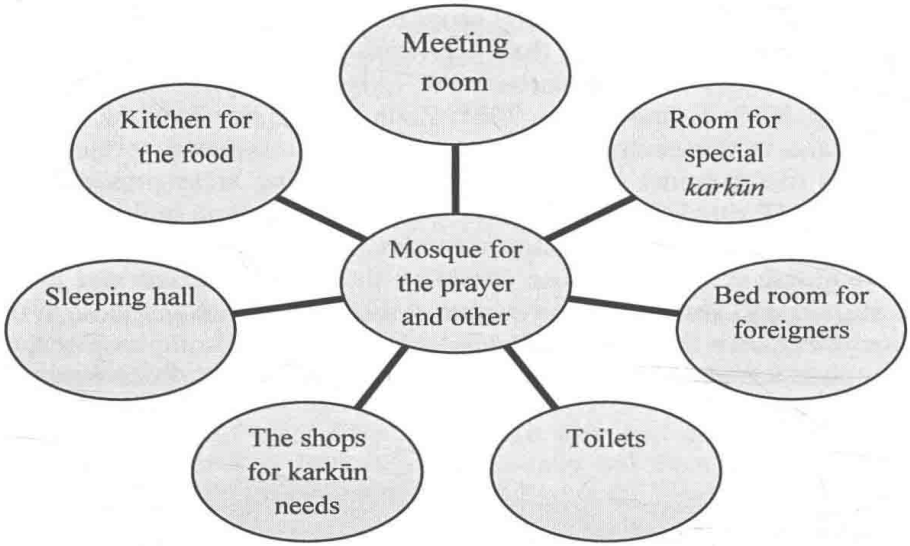



Diagram No. 1: The Setting of *Markāż*

The movement seeks to establish a mosque-based Islamic mission as the Prophet did in his era. In doing so, it aims to revive the spirit of the Prophet through *da'wa*, which is why the *markāż* is under the control of a council or a small committee that controls the entire institution. This is also seen as a way to return to the era of the Prophet: the Islamic missionary spirit that he implemented is adopted by the members of Jama'ah Tablīgh. In this context, the *markāż* can be seen as the place where the authority of the international *markāż* in Nizamuddin is transferred. To complete this transnationalisation of authority, the movement makes regulations with the idea that good conduct is an integral part of the worship of Allah.

## Activities

In this section I describe the Tablighists who run the *markāż*. Most Islamic movements have leaders who play important roles in administration. Usually the public knows who the leader of an Islamic

movement is,[7] even though they may not meet him (Stern, 2005). This is also the case for the structural organisation of Jamā'ah Tablīgh. As mentioned above, many believe that this movement does not have a structure and is therefore not well organised. However, my fieldwork indicated quite the contrary – that the role played by the *markāż* leads to a very tight form of internal organisation within Jamā'ah Tablīgh. By describing those who play important roles and their responsibilities I conclude that JT is organised in the spirit of Islam without any training or study of management on the part of its leaders. They coordinate with each other by linking themselves as "slaves" of God. The rewards for this activity are given in Paradise, but the Tablighists never told me about how they manage the organisation. It can be said that *karkūn* work according to their soul, and not only by the rational explanation that all JT activities, including administrative tasks, are viewed first and foremost as acts of worship rather than as purely functional.

Each section and person in the *markāż* has a clearly defined set of tasks. Conflicts of interest are not a problem. Most *karkūn* work according to guidelines that promise them rewards from God. It is often observed that religious activity is not about earning income, but about preparing oneself for meeting God (Bottignolo, 1995; Feener, 1999; Jamhari, 2000; Sila, 2001; Muhaimin 2006, 1996; Kasimin, 1991).

## *The shūra*

In every country the *markāż shūra* is the top leadership of Jamā'ah Tablīgh. This consists of senior *karkūn* who administer the organisation. They live in the mosque and devote themselves actively to the movement. I was told that *shūra* should have a feeling of sadness and hesitation about the condition of Muslims in the world, especially the decrease in morality and worship of Allah. Persons selected for the *shūra* must be *karkūn* who have been involved in the movement for many years. They are appointed at a national meeting with the approval of Nizamuddin. Travel on *khurūj* to IPB, 40 days overseas and involvement in many programs in the *markāż* are important qualifications for the position. Seniority and loyalty are therefore key criteria in the selection of *shūra* membership.

In their everyday lives, they follow the example of the Prophet in their feelings about the state of the Muslim community. It is said that when the Prophet died, he mentioned his concern for the Muslim community after he had passed away three times. He did not care about his family or wealth

[7] See for example Dekmejian (1985:179-191).

during his life-time. One of his daughters (Fatimah binti Rasulullah) said that in the last sentence uttered before his death, the Prophet said: *ummatī...ummatī...ummatī...* (my followers...my followers...my followers...) Many believe that this is the spirit of Islamic missionary movements – that the only way to protect the Islamic community is to return to the Qur'an and Sunnah by following the pathway of the Prophet. Tablighists interpret the message from the Prophet as supporting missionary work, the preaching of Islam to the world.

To be a *shūra*, one should share this feeling. One should be worried about what would happen to people in the world if Muslims no longer worshipped Allah. He would send disaster to the earth, as he did before the time of the Prophet of Muhammad. To avoid disaster, *shūra* must think about how to increase the number of *jamā'ah* in every part of the world. As result, when every *shūra* in every country has this feeling, it is easy to organise them. I was told that this attitude must be transmitted from the highest level of the movement to all those at the *mohalla* level.

For *shūra*, there is no time when they are not thinking of sending *jamā'ah* to IPB or elsewhere. They continue until midnight asking Allah for help during the *tahajjud* prayer. These activities are obligatory for all *shūra* in JT. One *karkūn* told me that the face of a *shūra* is very tired and he never complains about his duty. He would travel around Malaysia to monitor the activities of *karkūn*. A *shūra* must also listen to reports from all *markāż* in Malaysia. These reports include descriptions of the situation of *jamā'ah*, *markāż* activities, the number of *karkūn* going on *khurūj* and the main obstacles to *da'wa*. All these matters are discussed by *shūra* and other senior *karkūn* in Sri Petaling. I was informed that *shūra* have such meetings daily with senior *karkūn*.

Further action is required to coordinate the responses to information received by the headquarters. First, the *markāż* sends an answer to the state *markāż*. For example, if a state *markāż* wants to hold *jorh*, it must be approved by *shūra* and international headquarters must be informed. Second, when organising *khurūj* overseas, the Sri Petaling *markāż* will forward the request to Nizamuddin. For example, if there were a request for travel to another country, Sri Petaling would take consideration from India, because this relates to the needs of *jamā'ah*. The advice from Nizamuddin is likely to be obeyed by *shūra* and *karkūn* in the territory. Third, the *shūra* may answer certain questions directly without referring them to Nizamuddin. Such is the case for questions to do with administrative processes in the state *markāż*, where *shūra* can make decisions about special issues such as schooling, the changing of the head of centre and technical problems. Fourth, *shūra* may provide answers by

visiting *markāż* to give *targhīb* and *tarhīb* (motivational talks) to *karkūn*. This is done at the time of *jorh* when meeting with *karkūn*.

This model of leadership follows the practice used in earlier times when electing *sahābat* to be a caliph. The *ahl hallī wa al-'aqdī* were a group with the authority to decide who would become a caliph after the death of the Prophet. According to Wael B. Hallaq the main duty of *ahl hallī wa al-'aqdī* was "to offer the office of caliphate to the most qualified person and upon his acceptance, to administer to him an oath of allegiance (*bay'ah*)" (Hallaq, 1995: 53). This committee was made up of respected ulama chosen not for reasons of representativeness, but because of their wisdom and knowledge of Islam. According to Islamic tradition, the decisions of *ahl hallī wa al-'aqdī* must be followed because they were the people called *ulil amri* (leaders). Hallaq says that in the modern era, the title has significance as "intimately connected with expanded meaning of the concept of *shūra*, a term that previously meant consultation among the oligarchs on political matters, including the appointment of a caliph" (Hallaq, 1995: 53). Thus, we can say that Jamā'ah Tablīgh has adopted the traditional Islamic model of leadership.

The *shūra* looks like a European-style parliament, because it consists of elected people who gather to discuss matters of national importance. However, among Jamā'ah Tablīgh members the concept and function of *shūra* is not discussed. In fact, *karkūn* believe that Jamā'ah Tablīgh is not a political movement, even if the *shūra* functions as a form of Islamic government. Nevertheless, Tablighists never talk about an Islamic state or government, even though they implement the concept of Islam in the name of *da'wa* activity. By contrast, most Islamic movements urge the establishment of an Islamic state and the implementation of Islamic law through political, even radical, activity.[8]

It seems that religious experience within the Jamā'ah Tablīgh is very important for *karkūn* to be elected as a member of *shūra*. For example, travelling to IPB and attending international gatherings might be understood as ways of experiencing the obstacles faced by the Prophet when he was disseminating the message of Islam in Mecca and Medina. *Karkūn* describe South Asia as like Mecca and Medina at the time of the Prophet. For them, the trip is very challenging, with Pakistan being a region of conflict and the poverty in India and Bangladesh. This experience of following the Prophet's method affects the souls of those *karkūn* who would be *shūra*. A *karkūn* who travels away from the *markāż* is not seen as absent, but rather as increasing his religious experience.

[8]See for example Appleby (2000); Esposito (1997).

During my fieldwork, a *karkūn* told me about non-*karkūn* who aspire to the highest position in the organisation without performing *khurūj* in IPB. One said that "being a *karkūn* is being away from your house and mosque, not just sitting in the mosque".

## *The Jamā'ah Tasykīl*

When I was in Sri Petaling, when the *bayānist* finished his one-and-a-half hour sermon, those attending would request to go on *khurūj*. At this time, many *karkūn* stand with paper and pen. They circle the prayer hall asking to register for *khurūj*. One *jamā'ah tasykīl* member stands behind the *bayānist*, inviting *karkūn* to go on *khurūj*. If anyone wants to join, the *jamā'ah tasykīl* will ask for his name and address, a process called *takaza* (request or command). During the *takaza*, the *jamā'ah tasykīl* will make time to invite people to tour IPB and elsewhere overseas. They repeatedly stress that the request comes from Allah, not from human beings.

The *jamā'ah tasykīl* then records all the names, which are forwarded to be processed in *tafakkud* (a process of preparation for *karkūn*), and so that the route of the *khurūj* can be arranged. I was told that this process is very important in the *markāż*, because it means the *markāż* will have a list of all *karkūn* and their destinations, for administrative and security purposes.

When I joined my first *khurūj* in Sungai Manis, I learned about the function of *jamā'ah tasykīl* (administrative staffs). Ruslani, a *karkūn* in *tasykīl*, attended the first meeting to tell us our route. He seemed to have comprehensive knowledge of all the stopping places in Kuala Lumpur and Selangor. He gave us the name of a *surau* (prayer hall) in Sungai Manis. We agreed with his suggestion, because the place was not far from the *markāż*. Then, he asked about our experiences of *khurūj*. He asked whether any of us had done *khurūj* before. He asked us to write down our names and addresses. After that, he asked about the preparation of food (*ta'ām*). We looked at each other, saying "we do not have any set of *ta'ām*". He said: "Ok I will rent mine to all of you, but you need to bring it back to the *markāż* after *khurūj*". He asked whether one of us had a car to go to Sungai Manis. We said that only one *karkūn* had a car. He then called his friend, a police-*karkūn* in Sungai Manis, and asked him to take us to the *surau*. In the end, he said: "OK, everything is organised, please follow your *amīr sāf* (leader) and please maintain good conduct when you are in Sungai Manis". After he finished, he left the meeting, saying *assalāmu'alaykum* (peace upon all of you). Before leaving, he gave us his mobile phone number in case we had any problems in the field.

I knew Ruslani was *jamā'ah tasykil* when I conducted *khurūj*. A *karkūn* told me that he had been performing this function for four months in Sri Petaling. He was from Sungai Payau in Selangor. His job was to make sure that our trip was well organised. He then forwarded our data to the *jamā'ah tasykīl*. They did not come to our place of *khurūj*, but he sent a *karkūn*. Dynnyï, a friend and my contact person in Bandar Sri Perdana, told me that he was friend of Ruslani. Dynnyï had himself been a *jamā'ah tasykil* in Sri Petaling for four months before Ruslani. To be *jamā'ah tasykīl*, there are a number of requirements. First, the person should have four months experience in IPB and forty days overseas *khurūj*. Second, he must have experience of all *halaqah* and *mohalla* programs, such as meetings, *ta'lim* (studying) and *ġast* (inviting people to the mosque). Third, he should represent a *mohalla* which has more than fifteen *karkūn*, meaning that when the *karkūn* is as *jamā'ah tasykīl* at the *markāż*, other *karkūn* can replace him at the *mohalla* level.

## *Organising khurūj*

When I was in the field performing noon prayers in the Sri Petaling mosque, there was a *karkūn* behind me without gameez. After the prayer he told me that he wanted to take a Pakistani *karkūn* to his mohalla in Banting, Seremban. The *markāż* informed his *mohalla* that they could welcome foreign *karkūn* from Pakistan. When foreign *karkūn* are received at the *markāż*, they are asked how many days they plan to spend in Malaysia. Most incoming *karkūn* plan either to stay for forty days or are just in transit from IPB. For those on forty-day visits, the *markāż* gives them the route of their travels in Malaysia. The international *markāż* informs Sri Petaling about the coming of a group of *khurūj*. Sri Petaling would consider this in a *mushāwarah*. No foreign *karkūn* comes to Malaysia without information from the international *markāż*. Sometimes the trip will not last forty days, if *karkūn* are only able to obtain thirty-day visas. For this reason, *karkūn* will travel to Thailand or Indonesia to complete the required 40 days.

*Karkūn* in transit, usually from Indonesia, who want to travel to Jakarta or Medan, might stay for one or two weeks in Malaysia, basing themselves at Sri Petaling. During this period, the *markāż* sends them to *mohalla* around Kuala Lumpur or Selangor. Many *karkūn* stop at the *markāż* to complete their period of *khurūj*. In this case, the *markāż* treats them as guests on the second floor of the mosque. During transit, they eat for free. A *karkūn* from Jakarta who had just finished his trip in IPB told me that he stopped at the *markāż* to buy a return ticket to Jakarta. This was his first

time in Malaysia. He was waiting for someone from the *markāż* to handle his ticket. He said that there is a special *karkūn* from the *markāż* who can buy tickets and get their visas. It seems that the *markāż* also provides travel services for those going on *khurūj* or returning to their home countries. So *karkūn* stay at the *markāż* for only three days, just to get their tickets. Another *karkūn* was from Aceh, staying at the *markāż* for a couple of weeks. He was familiar with Kuala Lumpur and during his transit, he took *khurūj* in different parts of the city including Chow Kit and Kampung Baru, where many Acehnese live. There was also an Acehnese *karkūn* who had finished his trip to IPB and was continuing his *khurūj* in Malaysia after stopping over in Sri Petaling. After a couple of days in the *markāż*, he asked permission to travel to Penang and Thailand. After that, he went back from Penang to Medan by ferry. In sum, the *markāż* not only handles the travel for incoming *karkūn*, but also provides other services. Given this situation, the coordination between each *markāż* in the country plays a major role in the organisation of the *khurūj*. Usually Indonesian *karkūn* do not return directly to Indonesia after their IPB trip, but travel overland to Malacca, to Riau province, or Johor-Singapore-Batam. However, they must inform Sri Petaling on leaving, so that headquarters can inform the state *markāż* in Malacca or Johor.

Arrangements for out-going *khurūj* are different. Here, the *markāż* will first assist *karkūn* for four-month trips. The process begins with registering the names of all the *karkūn* in Malaysia that were collected during *malam markāż* or meetings. The *jamā'ah tasykīl* will classify the names and the targets of their *khurūj*. Most *karkūn* who register are interviewed (*tafakkud*) before departure. They are asked about their preparations, budgets for themselves and their families, the permission from the office, whether they have already done a three-day *khurūj* and their role in *mohalla* programs. These interviews take place on weekends. Departures to IPB are usually scheduled every two months and sometimes include Indonesian *karkūn*.

The group is not allowed to travel without confirmation from the international headquarters, so their names are forwarded to Nizamuddin. After the interview, a *karkūn* collects the money for tickets and visas. I was told that this takes a couple of weeks. But, it is recommended that *karkūn* not buy their ticket or visas individually. The total cost of a trip to IPB is about RM 3000 (AUD 1,500). The *karkūn* travel to India on tourist visas; they give their money to someone in charge of ticketing and visas, who is familiar with the staff at the Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi embassies. It is reported that the Pakistan embassy does not give visas easily, due to the political situation there. I was told that some *karkūn*

could not get visas, without any reasons being given, probably because they were thought to be potential jihadists by the Embassy. I was informed that many Malay jihadists go to Pakistan as *karkūn*, and never return to Malaysia. To solve this problem, the interview (*tafakkud*) at the markāż is very important to avoid any "double mission" by *karkūn* in Pakistan. The government suspects some of Jamā'ah Tablīgh members are radicalist. During my field work, *karkūn* always rejected this assumption, saying "we do not know every one who joins the *khurūj* and their background. We do our best to bring the Islamic message to the world, but not for jihad". I was told that every *jamā'ah* who travels to IPB is greeted by members of Jamā'ah Tablīgh at the airport. They go to the international *markāż* to register and hand in their passports. When their visas are about to expire, *karkūn* from the international *markāż* will inform them and take them to the border to continue their trip in Pakistan.

*Karkūn* who go on overseas *khurūj* for forty days may not depart before receiving confirmation from the international headquarters. The latter sends a list of target places around the world as *takaza* for all *karkūn*. For those going elsewhere, there is the additional requirement that *karkūn* should first spend time in IPB. Those wanting to travel to Hong Kong or China must be able to speak Chinese. During trips to China, they stay at hotels and must be able to speak Chinese.

## *Khidmat*

*Khidmat* (voluntary service) at the *markāż* involves service in one of four areas: reception, cleaning, cooking or security. The *khidmat* section provides support for all activities in the *markāż* on a voluntary basis. *Khidmat* lasts ten days. *Karkūn* from *markāż* in Malaysia may contribute in this way, however, they should inform the *markāż* about their intention to do *khidmat* and what kind of job they want.

A receptionist *karkūn* welcomes and records all visitors to the *markāż*. He sits at a table in a corner of the sleeping hall with a pen, book, fan, pillow, the Qur'an and mineral water. I met some of the receptionists and asked them about the job. A *karkūn* named Ibrahim in his 60s who received me as a guest at the *markāż*, described the work in the following terms.

I said: "*Ustāż*, I would like to register to stay in the *markāż* for a couple of days".

He replied: "Yes, sure, please tell me who you are?"

I showed him my passport, as I suspected I would join the foreign *karkūn*. However, he said: "You may stay on the second floor, because you are Indonesian".

During this conversation, I could see the book in which he wrote my name. There, the receptionist records the name and origins of guests, their purpose, and the duration of their stay. There are two books – one for locals and the second for international visitors.

After he said I could stay on the second floor, he asked what I was doing in the *markāż*. He did not ask this directly, but his eyes told me about what he thought about me. I was not carrying a lot of luggage, like a *karkūn* returning from *khurūj* in IPB or elsewhere. I hold an Indonesian passport and wanted to stay in the mosque. However, I could speak Malay, which indicated I might be a "Malay", especially since I told him that I had a Masters degree from a university in Kuala Lumpur and was living at Taman Utama near *mohalla* Bandar Sri Perdana Baru.

After I had told him all that, he said that I could stay on the first floor with the local *karkūn*. Then, he added, smiling: "You are the same age as my son".

On the table, there was a sheet of paper listing the shifts of reception, which are two hours each. After each shift, the receptionist must sign this paper, as a report to the *markāż*, before being replaced by another *karkūn*. If there are no visitors, receptionists mostly read the Qur'an or chat with their friends. However, they do not leave the table unless there is someone else to receive guests. When I slept at the *markāż*, I did not see *karkūn* registered at this section. The only *karkūn* who are registered are from outside Kuala Lumpur

Those volunteering for the cleaning service clean the entire *markāż*, including the two hundred toilets. Cleaning takes place on Friday morning because of the *jum'ah* prayer and for the night gathering (*malam markāż*) on Saturdays. When *karkūn* clean the sleeping hall, everyone must move all of their belongings to another room. In Malaysia, mosques usually pay for cleaning services. But in the *markāż*, the *karkūn* are strongly encouraged to see this as work for Allah.

As for cooking, I refer to my field notes:

> In mid-January 2007, I met Pak De Paijo, a Javanese *karkūn* who works as a labourer in Kuantan, Pahang. He was doing *khidmat* by cooking for ten days. He finds the job very tiring, because they cook for so many people. They get up early to prepare breakfast. After that, they rest for a while, but they then need to prepare lunch. It seems they prepare meals not only for the students at *markāż*, but also for almost three hundred *karkūn*.

Most students work as guards on 24-hour shifts. They carry rattans and monitor the mosque at night. However, more security is needed, especially during the weekly gatherings or *jorh*. I described above how the security guards treat the *karkūn*. However, on week days, we do not see security in the mosque itself, although if necessary guards will approach the *karkūn* and give advice. I asked one of the *karkūn* about this. He replied that security guards in the *markāż* act like spies. They might sleep behind us, acting like ordinary *karkūn*, in order to monitor visitors. They also memorise the faces of the *karkūn*, coordinating closely with the *istiqbāl* (reception). Every two hours at the end of their shifts, the receptionists help security guards to monitor un-wanted visitors.

Photo 7. Security guards with sticks during preparations and bazaar for Saturday night gathering (*malam markāż*) (Author, 2007)

My impression was that the mosque is very safe, although *karkūn* told me that sometimes belongings such as mobile phones and money are stolen. Mazlan, a *karkūn* from Sabah who was doing *khimat* as a receptionist, told me that they have to keep an eye on every visitor, because theft will create a negative image of the *markāż* to Muslims and outsiders. Other *karkūn* also said that not every visitor who wears the gameez is a *karkūn*. Thus, security guards must be vigilant.

In addition, there is a group of older *karkūn* who devote themselves to what I call lifelong *khidmat*. Most of them are retired from other jobs or have no family to support them. Instead of living at their home with nothing to do, they prefer to stay at the mosque to worship Allah. A *karkūn* named *ustāż* Rahmat – I prefer to call him Tuan Haji Rahmat – told me that in a year he had only spent two months in his house:

We talked about his experiences in doing *da'wa* in Malaysia and other countries. He is 62 and has ten sons. He came from Perlis and spoke in the Perlis dialect. It was hard to understand his dialect, but I understood that he wants to stay at the mosque for the remainder of his life. He said that each son gives him RM 100 every month. He joined Jamā'ah Tablīgh in 1998 and has conducted the three-days and forty-days *khurūj*. He gave me a picture of his monthly activities as part of the JT as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| *Jum'ah* prayer | : 4 days. |
| Saturday night gatherings (*malam markāż*) | : 8 days |
| Three days *khurūj* | : 3 days |
| *Khidmat* at *markāż* | : 10 days |
| Total | : 25 days |

This number does is not include the forty days *khurūj* every year.
(Field notes 22 March 2007)

During *khidmat* he served as a receptionist. During his free time he read the Qur'an and prayed. He said that he would spend the remainder of his life worshipping Allah. Those on lifelong *khidmat* walk very slowly and tend to advise young *karkūn* like me to give our full commitment to Jamā'ah Tablīgh. Some repeatedly told me about the ascetic life – doing what the Prophet did in his era, that is, spreading the Islamic message to people around the world. During my fieldwork in Sri Petaling I often met Tuan Haji Rahmat and his friends. It seems that the *markāż* tends to employ such elder *karkūn* in the reception section because they recognise the faces of visitors, while the security section prefers young *karkūn* for their strength.

As noted, *khidmat* for Jamā'ah Tablīgh is done on a voluntary basis. Work is seen as only for Allah, part of one's submission to Him. Before "ten-days" *khidmat*, volunteers attend a *bayān hidāyah* session which offers religious advice. There, the *karkūn* are offered a religious justification for doing *khidmat*. They are told that their service will be rewarded by Allah in Paradise, that the *shūra* cannot pay them in the world, because the Creator of Earth will reward them, giving them a key to enter paradise and *bidadari* (a beautiful woman in Paradise). This message reminds them of the importance of missionary activity as part of the Prophet's ways. As a result, they should work very hard on every *takaza* given to them by the *markāż*.

When they finish *khidmat*, the *karkūn* listen to *bayān tangguh*, in which they are told about what they should do after finishing a *taqaza*. This *bayān* reminds them about what has been going on during their *khidmat*. The service and worship during the period of *khidmat* is a time

between man and his Creator. *Karkūn* are encouraged to inform other *karkūn* to do as they did in the *markāż* at *halaqah* or *mohalla* during weekly meetings.[9]

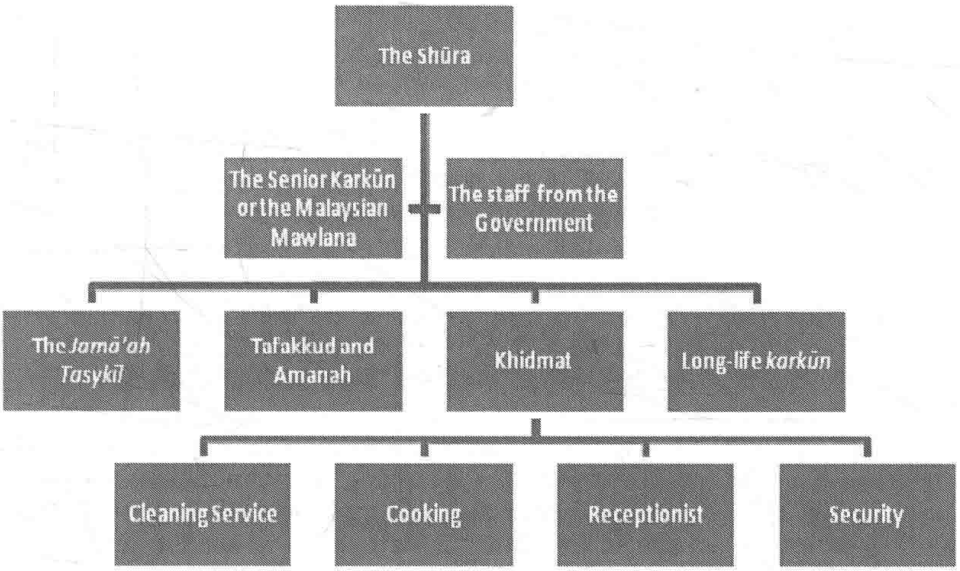



Diagram No. 2: The structural organisation of Jamā'ah Tablīgh

## Conclusion

In this chapter I have examined the nature of activity at the national *markāż*. It is can be seen that the movement seeks to establish a mosque-based Islamic mission as the Prophet did in his era. By doing so, it aims to revive the spirit of the Prophet in *da'wa*. Thus, the headquarters must be under the direction of a council or a small committee, which controls the entire range of activities, as was the case during the era of the Prophet. The Islamic missionary spirit that he implemented is adopted by the members of JT. In this context, the *markāż* can be seen as the place where the authority of the international *markāż* in Nizamuddin is transferred. By implementing its message, the *markāż* moves to rid the organisational structure of any worldly interest. All sections work only in relation to the dream of paradise. The soul has the power to work, thereby enhancing the message that everyone in the world must donate their time, selves and

[9] See Chapter 4.

money, and Allah will reward them later. Thus, giving sermons before and after *khidmat* is a means of keeping the soul close to God. It is also well known that in Islam, everything that is good must be spread to others. As the Prophet said, '*ballighū 'annī wa law āyah*' (please disseminate my message to others, even single words).

Among Tablighists, privileges are absent from the hierarchy. A career at the *markāż* is not seen as providing one with power to control other groups. Activities in the *markāż* are not seen as a form of political mobilisation against the government but as enhancing cultural power to mobilise people to worship Allah by returning to the Qur'an and the Sunnah. This chapter demonstrates the validity of Van Bruinessen's argument that "the political demands of 'fundamentalist' Islamic opposition groups vary so much from country to country that they appear to depend more on situational factors than on any clear cut set of 'fundamentalist' ideas" (Van Bruinessen, 1996: 89).

In this chapter, we have seen that the distribution of duties among *karkūn* is based on a voluntary system. However, religious messages, which are delivered during *bayān* and *mushāwarah*, as we see in the next chapters, play an important role by focussing spiritual power on doing duty. This is also a means of generating spiritual experience. In this sense, the job of senior *karkūn* is to remind their fellows about the promise of Allah for those who donate their time, selves and money to the path of Allah. We can say that in the mosque, they increase the spirituality of heart and mind, moving from one level to another of religious awareness. This process is supplemented by the experience of doing *khurūj*, also based in mosques.

This use of mosques can be seen as a way of implementing shariah rather differently from the way it is normally understood. Thus, the Islamic state is being silently promoted by Jamā'ah Tablīgh. A *karkūn* told me that if every Muslim performs *shalāt* in a mosque, we might say that an Islamic state has been achieved. Historically, when the Prophet began his *da'wa* in Medina, many said that he set up a state in the city, because he centred all his activities on the mosque called Masjid Nabawī. Here it can be argued that there is no separation between religion and state, or state and church. In this way Jamā'ah Tablīgh provides a model of an Islamic state or Islamic caliphate of the kind implemented by the Prophet in Medina. Similarly, the international *markāż* acts as system of transnational government, similar to that associated with the expansion of Islam during the *khalifah ar-rāshidūn* from the eighth century until the decline of the Ottoman Empire in Turkey. However, in that era, the mosque was not seen as the centre of government; rather they used the

model of a monarchy in the exercise of power. It might be said then, that Jamā'ah Tablīgh represents a return to a "real Islamic caliphate", embedded at the level of religious experience.

In this chapter, I have also examined the administrative system of Jamā'ah Tablīgh. I would argue that the main things that all effort must achieved in *markāż* because *karkūn* believe that all of their activities are due to Allah. Thus, donating self, time and funds has been seen as a path to achieving Allah's will (*ridha Allāh*). I have explored how the distribution of tasks among *karkūn* is based on this belief. The next chapter is about *mushāwarah* (meetings) among *karkūn*. While in this chapter we have described the nature of organisation and the internal situation of religious awareness in each group who work in the *markāż*, in the next chapter I discuss the operational system and the distribution of information and duties among Tablighists, and how this relates to religious experience. We start to look more closely at the internal situation of *karkūn* faith when they begin to work in the path of Allah (*fī sabīlillah*).

# CHAPTER FOUR

# *MUSHĀWARAH*

## Introduction

This chapter discusses one of the main ways in which decisions are made and problems are solved among Jamā'ah Tablīgh members. This is the *mushāwarah* or meeting.[1] It is highly ritualistic, occurring at every ritual (*khurūj*, *ijtimā'*, *bayān*, etc.), involving a number of requirements for *karkūn* engaged in the *da'wa* spirit and rules of meeting (*adab musharah*). For this reason, I argue, it is also a site of religious experience among *karkūn*. Here, I describe my experience of taking part in *mushāwarah* as a *karkūn*.

My first impression was that *mushāwarah* was not important; because the term is used widely among Malay Muslims in Southeast Asia to describe the way Malays organise their activities in groups. In Malaysia, the term *mushāwarah* is written *mesyuarat*, while in Indonesia it is written *musyawarah*. I had assumed that the term had the same meaning for *karkūn*. However, I discovered that *mushāwarah* among *karkūn* are not the same as traditional meetings among Muslims in Southeast Asia. For *karkūn, mushāwarah* is part of a religious ritual and is strictly regulated by a set of rules known as *adab mushāwarah*. In the Islamic tradition, *mushāwarah* is the way Muslims solve problems in their daily lives; but in recent decades it has also come to be understood as a Muslim form of democracy (Sulaiman, 1998).

Most sources use the term *shūra* to translate the English word democracy, a secular way of making decisions. Sulaiman says that "democracy and *shūra* [are] synonymous in conception and principle,

---

[1] The word *mushāwarah* comes from *shūra* which means same as the concept of democracy. For Muslim, it is widely recognised that the form of *mushāwarah* is taken from al-Qur'an (Surah Āli 'Imrān (3) verse: 159): '*...wa shāwirhum fī al-amri, faiżā 'azamta fatawakkal 'alā Allah, inna Allah yuhibbu al-mutawakkilīn*' (and consult Them in affairs (of moment). Then, when thou hast taken a decision, put thy trust in Allah. For Allah loves those who put their trust in (Him).

although they may differ in details of application to conform to local customs" (Sulaiman, 1998: 98). This indicates that the term is used in socio-political rather than cultural settings.

In this chapter, I examine the nature of *mushāwarah* in a *mohalla* in Cot Keumuneng in Aceh and then describe my own experience attending *mushāwarah* in *halaqah* in Sri Perdana Baru. By looking closely at this mosque-based, ritualised form of meeting, I explain how members of Jamā'ah Tabligh negotiate the donation of time, self and money, and manage their transnational activities on the path of Allah while maintaining their group membership and family ties. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the desire to proceed on the path of Allah is embedded in every ritual, including *mushāwarah* as part of a *karkūn*'s spiritual journey to achieve a higher level of religious awareness in order to become human. In addition, I hope to provide the internal perspective of Tablighists, who are accused by some Muslims of abandoning their family during *khurūj*.

*Mushāwarah* at *mohalla* and *halaqah* levels differ in their cultural atmosphere. However, I am unable to report on *mushāwarah* among the Tabligh elite, so the typology is limited to my study of the nature of *mushāwarah* in *mohalla* and during *khurūj*. This includes a discussion of *syor*, the way in which ideas are expressed during *mushāwarah*. I focus on the way *karkūn* present their views during such meetings and the rules that they must follow in doing so. The final section discuses the *jorh*, a form of meeting that takes place in the territory of the *markāż*.

## *Mushāwarah* among *karkūn*

I was invited to many *mushāwarah* by *karkūn* in Banda Aceh and Kuala Lumpur. In one, in Cot Keumuneng, a *karkūn* by the name of *ustāż* Ibrahim sent me a text message saying that if I wanted to know about Jamā'ah Tablīgh, I should come to their mosque on Wednesday night. He promised that he would tell me about JT in Aceh if I could come before *maġrib* (evening prayer, usually between 6:30 and 7:20 p.m.). I rode my motorbike to the mosque in Cot Keumuneng, which is only 3 km from Banda Aceh City, arriving at 6.45 p.m. when another *jamā'ah* (group of Muslims) was praying *maġrib*. This made it evident that the mosque was not administered by the *karkūn* and that it was not a Jamā'ah Tablīgh *mohalla*. *Karkūn* told me that they had obtained permission to perform JT rituals in the mosque from *Teungku Imūm* (religious leader). In the eyes of *karkūn*, therefore, this mosque functions as a *mohalla* for *karkūn* living around this village.

Many cars and motorbikes were parked outside. Because the mosque is situated near the main road between Banda Aceh and Medan, many Muslims stop to perform *maġrib* there. When I was a student at an Islamic junior high school in Banda Aceh, I myself prayed at this mosque many times. I liked to pray there because *Teungku Imūm* had a beautiful voice when he recited the Qur'an. However, I did not see this him; instead there was an imam (mosque prayer leader) who wore gameez and also had a beautiful voice. But I was sure that this imam was not the same one as ten years ago. I knew the old imam was a graduate from al-Azhar University in Egypt. He is a lecturer at IAIN of Ar-Raniry in Banda Aceh.

When I entered the mosque I saw no *karkūn* wearing the gameez; most were wearing *sarung*. I was afraid that I was mistaken about my appointment. I also did not understand who or where *ustāż* Ibrahim was. Some *karkūn* said that he was a senior *karkūn* in Banda Aceh. It would be easy to recognise him, or I could ask other *jamā'ah* to help me.

Finally, after *'ishā'* prayer, some Tablighists began to sit in a circle, very close to each other. This circle reminded me of *halaqah*, a way of sitting when studying Islam in the mosque. No one speaks unless asked to. At the beginning of the meeting, they appoint an *amīr mushāwarah*, a *karkūn* who will be chairman for the entire of meeting. His main task is to manage the meeting in order to achieve the agenda. Everyone must listen to him before giving his own ideas. The amir has the authority to command others, which means he must manage the meeting according to the *adab mushāwarah.* Seniority is not the issue. In *adab mushāwarah*, a young man may also be amir.

Before the formal meeting started, the *karkūn* discussed a number of issues, as discussed in the following excerpt from my field notes:

> The *karkūn* talked about the family of *karkūn* who were away doing *khurūj*. The participants in the *mushāwarah* wanted to visit the family to know the situation and the needs of family. However, they would visit the family where a member was away for *khurūj* for four months or forty days, but not for only three days *khurūj* (field notes, 29 November 2006).

This discussion is considered very important because of the strong belief that *karkūn* must take care of their families. For *karkūn* who conduct four months *khurūj* in IPB, a participant will visit his family immediately on his return. However, not everyone can perform such a visit; only senior *karkūn* can do so. The aim of this is to avoid *fitnah* (gossip) among the villagers. In Acehnese society it is prohibited to visit someone's family if there is no husband or *muhrim* (a man or woman who cannot marry a family member) there. It is rumoured among Achenese that *karkūn*

abandon their families while they are on *khurūj*, especially those away for four months in IPB. During the *mushāwarah* the participants mentioned the names of three *karkūn* who were away from Cot Keumuneng. The senior *karkūn* decided on a time to visit these families. If one family member is sick or has a financial problem, the *karkūn* conduct another *mushāwarah* immediately. *Ustāż* Ibrahim told me that:

> People always blame us for abandoning the family, but we are in Jamā'ah Tablīgh which is like a big family. This relates to the *hadīth* of Prophet Muhammad that the Muslim community is like the human body. So every Muslim should feel the others' hurt. We take this lesson from Him. This meeting is a way to solve external and internal problems among *karkūn* in this *mohalla*. You may be surprised at the beginning, but once you enter our *mushāwarah*, you will understand what Muslims should do in their lives (29 November 2006).

During this *mushāwarah*, the *karkūn* discussed the question of who would take care of the *mastūrat* (female *karkūn*) when they visit the *mohalla*, even though there were no women present at this meeting. They cited the rule issued by Nizamuddin that:

> If there is a *mastūrāt* with her husband who comes from outside Aceh, she will be received by the family of a *karkūn* on condition that there is no baby in this family. His wife must be a *mastūrat* – a member of Jamā'ah Tablīgh – and have had the experience of going on *khurūj* for forty days (field notes 29 November 2007).

The *karkūn* made a strict ruling on this issue. They will not allow a *karkūn* family to receive *mastūrāt* where the wife has no experience of being away from her family for forty days. The reason a baby is not allowed is that *karkūn* believe that visits will disturb a family taking care of their baby. These requirements must be mentioned in the *mushāwarah*. I had heard about this regulation when I was attending a *mushāwarah* in Selangor. It seems that if the family has a baby in the house it may affect the performance of rituals in the house.

After making this ruling, the amir asked the *karkūn* whether they had information on the coming of *mastūrāt* to their *mohalla*. One *karkūn* answered by reading from his notes: "There will be *mastūrāt* coming to our *mohalla;* the *markāż* asks us if we can provide them with hospitality". The *mastūrāt* were coming from Malaysia (he did not mention from which part). After this announcement, the amir said: "OK, we just listened to this announcement. Can anyone provide hospitality?" No one answered the question, because it related only to a family, under the requirement above.

*Ustāż* Ibrahim raised his hand: "I can provide them with hospitality only on Sunday, because I will be home during the day. My wife and I work from Monday to Saturday, so it would be good if they could stay at our house". After this, the amir asked the secretary to take note of this. He asked who could provide hospitality on Friday and Saturday. A *karkūn* answered: "I just added two rooms to our house. I think those rooms could be used for *mastūrat*". The amir replied: "Do you have a baby in your house?" *Karkūn*: "No". Then, the amir said: "Ok, we have solved this problem. Please tell the *markāż* that we can offer hospitality to the *mastūrāt* next month".

This discussion was part of the main meeting, when they were discussing the agenda for future meetings. The weekly agenda was to decide who would deliver the *bayān* for the next week. They planned to hire a well-known *karkūn* from another place to give a *bayān* at this gathering. That night, the *karkūn* giving *bayān* was from Malaysia. *Karkūn* tend to invite *mubayyin* (*karkūn* who give *bayān*) from the *markāż* or around Banda Aceh to deliver such sermons. This issue is considered important because the better known the *mubayyin*, the more they can attract new members to Jamā'ah Tablīgh.

The discussion moved on to preparations for those interested in *khurūj* for four months in IPB, the Asia Pacific region, and Indonesia, and for forty days in Aceh or outside. They registered names at the meeting and those going to IPB would be interviewed. At this point, anyone may put their name forward, even if only to express an intention (*niyyat*). During this discussion, one *karkūn* said: "We still have our target for going *khurūj* to Papua. However, we need to wait for further information from *markāż*". Sharing information between *markāż* and *mohalla* is very important. This is because the decision that a *mohalla* makes may not go against a ruling issued by the *markāż* in Banda Aceh, Jakarta (Kebon Jeruk) or Nizamuddin. During the *mushāwarah*, a *karkūn* who had just returned from those *markāż* informed the meeting about the changing regulations for going on four-months *khurūj* to IPB. Previously, those wishing to do so were required already have done *khurūj* for forty days elsewhere overseas. But there was a new ruling that *karkūn* may visit IPB if they had done forty days *khurūj* in their home countries.

As a new *karkūn*, I found the discussion confusing because I did not know why everyone wanted to go to IPB. One of the *karkūn* behind me mentioned his intention of doing *khurūj* for four months in IPB. He works as a trishaw driver. I wondered how he could afford to live overseas for four months. How would he organise his trip? Why did he want to go to IPB rather than Mecca or Medina for *hajj*? I kept my questions to myself

and waited to see what would happen in this, my first *mushāwarah* with *karkūn*.

Preceding this discussion, one *karkūn* called me to sit behind him. I approached and shook his hand. I said: "My name is Kamaruzzaman". He replied: "Ibrahim". He wore gameez and had a long *janggut* (beard). "Sit here!" he said and I followed his direction to sit in the circle. At this point, those who were not JT members left the mosque to return to their homes. Among those left, there were some students, *tukang becak* (trishaw drivers), local traders, civil servants, and *tukang bangunan* (labourers). They chatted with each other about going on their missions. In fact, the amir was not wearing the gameez and *surban*. The newcomers were silent, with questions on their minds.

A 23-year old man whom I met during my field work in Banda Aceh wrote about his experience coming to this mosque:

> This moment was used to recruit me to be a *karkūn*. I was invited to their meeting and gathering by a Jamā'ah Tablīgh member at Cot Keumuneng. The person who asked me to visit this mosque was my lecturer, *Ustāż* Ibrahim. During class he gave a lecture on agriculture. It seems this strategy is used widely by *karkūn* to recruit new members. Thus, he invited us to his meeting in Masjid Cot Keumuneng on Wednesday night (field notes 5 December 2006).

Other topics that should be discussed in a *mushāwarah* include *khidmat* (voluntary services) at *markāż*. Here, *karkūn* will announce the need for *khidmat* at the *markāż* in Banda Aceh and Jakarta. However, *karkūn* in Cot Keumuneng only pay attention to the provincial level. On this issue, the amir began by saying that *khidmat* is an important part of *da'wa*. This effort, he said, will not succeed if we avoid the responsibility of *khidmat*. He told us that when we serve other people in this world, Allah will provide us with a beautiful house in paradise.

*Karkūn* who wanted to do *khidmat* were told to register their names during *mushāwarah*. Those who had just finished their *khidmat* gave information about what was going on at the *markāż*. The information might be about the arrival of *karkūn* from foreign countries or other provinces. The *karkūn* tell the members of the *mushāwarah* what they can do for the coming of other *karkūn* to the *markāż* or *mohalla*. This includes the discussion of hospitality for foreign *karkūn* who come with their wives. Those who want to perform *khidmat* may also bring current information from their *mohalla* to the *markāż*.

### *A mushāwarah in Malaysia*

Now I turn to my experience of attending a *mushāwarah* in Sri Perdana Baru. I visited a *mohalla* at Sri Perdana in Selangor in mid-February 2007. I had an appointment with *karkūn* named Dynnyï.[2] He sent me a text message inviting me to Sri Perdana Baru *mushāwarah* at Surau Salam. I got his name from Ruslani, a *karkūn* who gave us the route when I was on *khurūj* in January. To reach Sri Perdana Baru, I went by car from Kajang. I realised that I would have to arrive early at the *surau*. For this *mushāwarah*, I wore gameez. When I arrived at the *surau*, there were many cars. I parked my car and went inside.

When I arrived I heard the *jamā'ah* reciting *do'a* (prayer), as it is common for Malays to read Yāsīn (a *sūrah* in the Qur'an). I entered this *surau* and shook hands with two *jamā'ah* who were sitting outside the main hall. I saw that there were thirty-five Malay Muslims. I believed these were not the *karkūn* who were holding *mushāwarah* at this *surau* tonight because most of them were wearing *sarong* and *baju melayu* (Malay dress style).

This is why Dynnyï had invited me to go to *surau* at 9.30 p.m. I was thinking that I had come too early because I did not see any *karkūn*. To make sure, I went outside and checked that I was in the right place. I turned on my mobile phone to reread Dynnyï's message, thinking I might be in the wrong place.

After reciting *do'a* or *wirid* (a form of doing *żikir* – remembrance of Allah), the *jamā'ah* had dinner at the *surau*. I was told that tonight three people had donated the food consisting of *nasi lemak* (traditional Malay rice), *mee goreng* (fried noodles), and *nasi kuah* (coconut rice). I was uncomfortable, because I was the only one dressed in gameez. In fact, I knew I could take part in their ritual because I also did this in Aceh where, every Thursday night, Muslims recite Yāsīn as well as *wirid* after *Maġrib* prayer. However, I was still feeling that I was not part of this *jamā'ah* due to my gameez, and because my intention was to meet Dynnyï, not to attend this ritual.

Most *jamā'ah* were "staring" at me while I enjoyed the food, but I just smiled at them. I assumed that they thought that I was a *karkūn* who did not belong to this group. Or, they suspected that I was a newcomer to the community. I was thinking that my gameez would answer their question. However, when they asked about my identity I said that I come from

---

[2] See Chapter 8.

Aceh, and I am a student doing research in Malaysia. Their concern was not about me, but about the tsunami in Aceh.

Then, I performed *shalāt i'sha* with the *jamā'ah* at 8.45 pm. I was still waiting to see *karkūn*. Finally, after the prayer, *karkūn* came to the *surau*. When the *jamā'ah* left a few people remained, but they did not converse with each other. The *karkūn*, wearing gameez, sat with their friends, while others sat apart from them. From 9.15 p.m., one by one, *karkūn* came in to the *surau*. I still did not know which one was Dynnyï. I read some pamphlets outside the *surau*. There were many announcements, but also many advertisements. I sat near two *karkūn*s and read a book on Hadist among Tabligh (*Manākhib Ahadits*). The *karkūns* were speaking about *karguzari* (a short report of their *da'wa* activities), but I could not hear their words clearly. Then, one of the *karkūn* asked who I was. I said: "My name is Kamal."

He asked me: "What are you doing here?"

K: "I am studying in Melbourne. I am doing my Ph.D. study at a university in Australia".

He then asked me: "What is the topic of your dissertation?"

K: "The *da'wa* movement in Southeast Asia".

I did not mention the topic was Jamā'ah Tablīgh. I tried to avoid discussing such a sensitive of topic in front of him.

Professor: "Who are your supervisors?"

I mentioned my supervisor's name.

One of the *karkūn* said that the *karkūn* asking me the questions was a lecturer at the International Islamic University of Malaysia (IIUM). He is a graduate of Birmingham University and currently a professor of *da'wa* and Islamic theology. Then, he asked: "What is the religion of your supervisor?" I replied: "It is very sensitive asking about peoples' religion affiliation in the West".

P: "Yes, I know, but your topic is *da'wa*, isn't it?"

K: "Yes, but I am studying the Jamā'ah Tablīgh in Southeast Asia".

P: "You are studying the *da'wa* movement with special reference to Jamā'ah Tablīgh. There are lots of studies on this movement in UKM (National University of Malaysia) library".Before he answered my questions about *da'wa* in Southeast Asia, he explained: "You know, *Parameswara* [1344-1414][3] was the instigator of Islamisation in Southeast Asia. When he converted to Islam, most people in Nusantara embraced

[3] Parameswara is the first king in Melacca who converted to Islam and changed his name into Iskandar Shah.

Islam at that time in Pasai". I said that Pasai was in Aceh, the province in Indonesia where I was born. I knew this story, I told him.

P: "Did you tell your supervisor about Islam?"

K: "No".

P: "When I studied at Birmingham University, I converted one head of department to Islam. But I could not convert my supervisor. However, I always showed him how Islam worked. At prayer time, I told my supervisor that it is time for praying. My supervisor said, 'yes, please you pray in my room'. I think you can do this to your supervisor."

After we had chatted, a *karkūn* came to him. He shook hands with the professor. He had just finished his ten-days *khidmat* at *markāż*. His name was *Haji* Chulan.

At the start of the meeting there were only fifteen *karkūn* sitting in the circle. They began with the appointment of an amir. At this *mushāwarah* the amir was a young *karkūn*. *Haji* Chulan who had just came back from *markāż* gave his *karguzari* to the forum. Preceding this *karguzari*, one of *karkūn* gave a *bayān* to the participants. He explained about the importance of *fikir* (thinking seriously about the *da'wa*) as the starting point of their activities. *Fikir*, sitting and paying careful attention to each issue in the *mushāwarah*, is seen as submission to or *'ibadat* (worship) of Allah. The aim of *da'wa* is to implement *'ibadāt* (worship), *mu'āsharat* (social relationships) and *akhlāq* (good conduct or morality) in our daily lives, which are taken from the Prophet Muhammad. After the *bayān*, Haji Chulan gave information from the *markāż* that must be told to the *halaqah* (a JT territorial unit consisting of several *mohallas*) of members in the Sri Perdana Baru area. He told the *jamā'ah* that *khurūj* to IPB would start in April (2007). According to him, the *markāż* wanted one group of *jama'ah* from this *halaqah* to be sent to IPB for the next trip. He said that we could propose our names in the *mushāwarah*. For those intending to make the journey, the *markāż* would take responsibility for preparing the group, from arranging a meeting at *markāż* to organising the visas. He also informed the forum that the *markāż* had received information from Nizamuddin that *karkūn* were permitted to travel to Australia this year. As a result, if any *karkūn* had had experience of *khurūj* four months in IPB, he could register his name at this meeting. After he finished, the chairmanship of the meeting was taken over by the amir. He followed up the information from Haji Chulan with his *fikir* to the audience. He started with a message on the importance of the meeting and the aims of *da'wa* among *karkūn*.

During the meeting, a request for *khidmat* at the *markāż* was raised. No one among the *karkūn* was able to fulfil it. Then, the *amīr sāf* asked one of

the senior *karkūn* to give *targhīb* (motivational talks) on the meaning of *khidmat* at *markāż*. He said that if we preach Islam, it means that we are a good person. However, being a *khidmat markāż* also has virtues (*fadhīlāt*). Doing this job at the *markāż* because of Allah indicates that a person wants Allah and Allah also wants him. After this *targīb*, no one raised his hand to volunteer. Suddenly, other *karkūn* told the *jamā'ah* that *khidmat* plays an important role in *da'wa* activities. Our mission of *da'wa* is incomplete if we do not also perform *khidmat* at the *markāż*. Saying "*wa Allahi*" (in the name of God), he said that he had seen the *mawlana* at the *markāż* cleaning toilets with his students, as one of *khidmat* activities. I assumed that this was an illustration of how essential *khidmat* is for *karkūn*. After this *targīb*, three people volunteered to do *khidmat* at Sri Petaling *Markāż*. After this, one of the *karkūn* said that it is very hard to find *karkūn* to do *khidmat* at the *markāż*. When I was in Sri Petaling, those most likely to be doing the jobs were senior *karkūn*. It is reported that young *karkūn* are not eager to do *khidmat* at *markāż*.

This is a good foundation for investigating the nature of the *mushāwarah*. During my fieldwork I saw that the same *karkūn* would discuss what was going on in their circle. Problems that occur at their level will be solved in this forum. Second, the members of *mushāwarah* will seek a response to a request for help from the *markāż*. Thus, everyone involves themselves in finding a solution. Third, they discuss what they should do about going on *khurūj*. This pattern tell us how *karkūn* organise their *da'wa* activity at the local level. My experience informs me that all *takaza* are answered by *karkūn* because, according to them, these are requests from Allah.

## Types of *Mushāwarah*

*Mushāwarah* is an instrument of *da'wa* activity among Jama'ah Tablīgh members. In this context, Aziz maintains:

> [I]n Jamā'ah Tablīgh, *mushāwarah* is a highly important action which needs to be implemented when deciding the nature of the movement and the steps the *jamā'ah* [sic] will take in carrying out their proselytising. Every step of the preaching is discussed beforehand in an orderly manner and consequentially the latter steps must be in accordance with the decisions made at this meeting (Aziz, 2004: 497).

Many types of *mushāwarah* take place among *karkūn* in *mohalla*, *halaqah*, *markāż* and during *khurūj*. The *mushāwarah* described above is an example of weekly events held at *mohalla* level. The aim of such a

*mushāwarah* is to organise the weekly, monthly and yearly activities of the *mohalla*. Besides this, it plays an important role in coordinating activities at each level. This *mohalla* always coordinates with other *mohalla* by exchanging information. For example, in the *mushāwarah* at Sri Perdana Baru where *karkūn* discussed who was going on *khurūj* next month in Bandar Sri Kencana, after they had decided the place and time, they contacted the *karkūn* at the target place. They informed them about their coming the following month to Bandar Sri Kencana for three days. This *mohalla* had to inform the *markāż* that *karkūn* from Sri Perdana Baru would spend three days there. This is to avoid two groups doing *khurūj* in the same place. They also informed the administrative staff that the *surau* would be used by other *karkūn* from Sri Perdana Baru as a place for doing *khurūj*.

This coordination means that the *markāż* knows where the *jamā'ah* are and they keep records for administrative purposes. Coordination also takes place through the distribution of information on foreign *jamā'ah*. When I attended the *mushāwarah* in Sri Perdana Baru, the *karkūn* also discussed the problem of young *karkūn* not wanting to do *khidmat* at *markāż*.

Weekly meetings take place at the *markāż* level. After *'isha* prayer, a *karkūn* will ask the *jamā'ah* to sit together for a small *mushāwarah*. They will divide into groups of ulama, students and businessmen, etc. Each group discusses the issue of *da'wa* and the results of the meetings are forwarded to the *jamā'ah tasykīl*. However, these *mushāwarah* are not very effective, because during *malam markāż*, most *karkūn* spend their time chatting to each other, inside or outside the mosque. This is only part of the ritual of *malam markāż*, a part which is not very important for *karkūn*.

To discuss matters at the *markāż* level, daily *mushāwarah* attended by only a few *karkūn*s are held. Daily problems tackled in these meetings include who will be an imam for prayers, *bayānist*, and the situation of *jamā'ah foreign* in their territory. They also discuss preparations for sending *karkūn* overseas. In the weekly *mushāwarah*, which takes place during *malam markāż*, the *karkūn* who are responsible for *halaqah* share information from their *mohalla* on matters such as who will perform *khurūj* this year in IPB, how their preparations are progressing, who will serve as *khidmat*, where the targets of *khurūj* are and the like. The *karkūn* from the *markāż* also share information about the distribution of *karkūn* from outside provinces or foreign countries, new national and international *khurūj* routes, any rule changes from the regional, national or Nizamuddin *markāż* for doing *da'wa*, and so forth. All of the discussions are recorded in *buku mushāwarah* (the meeting book). Afterwards, *karkūn* can easily

follow up the development of *da'wa* activity in *markāż* territory. Reetz writes that:

> Tthe national leader [*shūra*] sends out regular letters of instruction to local centres (*marākaż*) [plural of *markāż*] summarising the results of national *shūra* meetings and containing advice; clearance for expenditure on matters such extending praying and meeting facilities at the local mosque or centre is sought from and given by higher standing councils in writing (Reetz, 2003: 5).

Communication among *karkūn* from the highest council down to the *mohalla* takes place by phone or fax. I was told that the *markāż* in Sri Petaling always receives a fax when they receive information from Nizamuddin. However, they will not bring the letter to the *mushāwarah*; instead, a *shūra* will inform the participants verbally. This information is then disseminated to the *halaqah* which controls four or five *mohalla*s. All of this information should be given in a *mushāwarah*, because every *karkūn* is expected to understand the progress of *da'wa* activity from Nizamuddin and the *markāż*.

The result of meetings at *mohalla* level are discussed at the *markāż*, including the names of those who want to do *khurūj* overseas for forty days or four months. Here, the name of *karkūn* is sent to the provincial *markāż* in order to fill the *takaza* (demands) of *jamā'ah*. As a result, one of the functions of *mushāwarah* is to deliver the *takaza* from national *markāż* and Nizamuddin. For example, there was a *takaza* from Nizamuddin to *markāż* around the world, that they intended to send *jamā'ah* to Brazil. Or, there was a *takaza* from the national *markāż* that they needed *karkūn* to travel to Hong Kong. The *markāż* will disseminate this information during the *mushāwarah*. After one or two months, they will receive some names of those who will fulfil these *takaza*. This may be why most *karkūn* who go overseas are registered at all levels from *mohalla* to Nizamuddin. In other words, no single group of *karkūn* departs from their countries of origin without the approval of the *markāż*. The *mushāwarah* therefore plays an important role in the spreading of *karkūn* around the world. This means the *markāż* takes the responsibility for any consequences arising from the attitudes of *karkūn* in the country. During the trip, they must follow the decisions of the *mushāwarah*, including the time, route and place for *da'wa*. They may not change the route or anything else decided at the *mushāwarah*.

*Mushāwarah* also takes place during *khurūj* time. Before *karkūns* depart, they conduct *mushāwarah*. This *mushāwarah* appoints an *amīr sāf* (the leader of the trip) and chooses the route of *khurūj*. The situation in

this *mushāwarah* is slightly different from others, because before the meeting starts, every *karkūn* must introduce himself. Since the group is made up of *karkūn* from different places, the introduction is very important to them knowing each other before they depart. There is no need for *karkūn* to do this if they all start their *khurūj* from one *halaqah* or *mohalla*, as they would already know each other.

After the introduction, they begin by choosing the *amīr saf* who will be the head of the group for the three-day *khurūj*. This meeting is sometimes attended by a *karkūn* from *jamā'ah tasykīl* at the *markāż*. He needs to attend this *mushāwarah* so that he can help with the preparations for the *khurūj*. However, he will not interfere in the *mushāwarah*, because the group already has a head. The meeting then decides on the route for *khurūj*. Because the members of *mushāwarah* are from different places, it is recommended that they select a route far from their home. If the *jamā'ah* cannot reach a decision during *mushāwarah*, they take advice from *jamā'ah tasykīl* from the *markāż*.

The *jamā'ah tasykīl* acts as a mediator between the *markāż* and the target of *khurūj*. The next issue discussed by the meeting is transport to the place of *khurūj*. The *amīr sāf* asked the participants whether they have vehicles. He said that he had a motorbike so he could take one person with him. Another said he would use his car. Since no one else had transport, the representative from *jamā'ah tasykīl* helped by phoning his friend who had a van.

During the three days, *mushāwarah* were held every morning, the aim was to assign tasks to everyone for the day. The *mushāwarah* was chaired by the *amīr sāf*. The first issue discussed is the budget for the day, how much *karkūn* should spend for meals and snacks. In addition, the *mushāwarah* assigns cooking duties for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. For this, they choose a *karkūn* with some expertise as *amīr ta'ām* (head of catering) and others to assist him. The *mushāwarah* also appoints a *mubayyin* – a *karkūn* to deliver the *bayān* for *maġrib* and *shubuh* prayers.

During such meetings *karkūn* are expected to have three feelings in their minds and souls: *jażbah, tarġīb* and *tasykīl*. The amir always states that *karkūn* must have *jażbah*, which means strong spirit and love for performing religious activities in daily life. In other words, *karkūn* believe that through *jażbah* they will happy if they are able to do the *takaza*. In addition, during the *mushāwarah*, *karkūn* should think about *tarġīb* when trying to motivate others. *Tarġīb* can be defined as the method of motivating *karkūn* to revive their intention for every *takaza*. The story of the *mawlana* cleaning toilets is an example of *tarġib* in this sense. Suffice

it to say that *targīb* is one reason why *karkūn* are always able ultimately to reach a decision.

The other means of enhancing the struggle of the spirit of *da'wa* in *mushāwarah* is through *tasykīl*. As discussed previously, *jamā'ah tasykīl* is a small group of *karkūn* who work at the *markāż*, "monitoring the development of proselytisation of groups in *halaqah* and *mohalla*, registering new members, and managing the division of target areas for proselytisation (*khurūj* targets)" (Aziz, 2004: 486). *Tasykīl* on its own refers to a process of convincing *karkūn* to ask people (including new members of Jamā'ah Tablīgh) to sacrifice their time on the path of Allah. The term is repeatedly mentioned during *mushāwarah*. For example, this *takaza* is *tasykīl* for us in this *mushāwarah*. By saying these words, most *karkūn* understand what they must do for this *takaza*. If it is impossible, for personal reasons, then the amir will speak about *targīb* and *tasykīl* for several minutes, inevitably concluding by saying: "this *taqaza* is from Allah, not from people in the world".

In these *mushāwarah* there are no debates among *karkūn*. They will not express their own opinions without the permission of the amir. It is widely believed that *karkūn* may not interrupt, because it is assumed that differences of opinion in *mushāwarah* are blessed by Allah. Meanwhile, differences of opinion outside the *mushāwarah* are condemned. The conclusions of the *mushāwarah* must take into account the main issues being discussed. To do this, participants allege that the truth comes only from Allah and the Prophet Muhammad. Thus there is no voting in a *mushāwarah*. I was told that voting is not part of Muslim tradition, because it would affect the aims of *da'wa* to follow the path of Allah. In fact, many Muslim *mushāwarah* do not conduct voting. I am not sure of the reason for this, but it is probably because voting is not part of the Muslim tradition. There is a *hadīth* in which the Prophet Muhammad said, "*al-ikhtilāf bayn ummatī rahmah*" (differences of opinion among my ummah are blessed). It seems that Jamā'ah Tablīgh follows this *hadīth* during their meeting. I saw that there were many opinions among Tablighists, but the amir makes the final decision.

After *mushāwarah*, *karkūn* follow the resolutions of the *mushāwarah*. There is no debate after this because to debate is to be damned. Those who want to debate the decisions made by the *mushāwarah*, as I did, are thought to be influenced by the devil. As a result, it is strongly recommended that another *mushāwarah* not be conducted after the first *mushāwarah*. At the end of *mushāwarah*, a prayer is recited by *karkūn*: "*subhān Allah wa bihamdihī Allahumma wa bihamdika Ashhadu'an Lā ilāha illā anta astaghgfiruka wa atūbu ilaika*'" (Glory is to you Allah and

with His praise. O Allah and with your praise I witness that there is no god, except you. I ask your forgiveness and I repent to you).

## *Syor*: expressing an idea

There are many ways of expressing an opinion in a *mushāwarah*. First, the chairman begins by asking participants about the issues to be discussed. When responding, participants use the word *syor* (give opinions). *Syor* means that *karkūn* can offer on an opinion on the topic of discussion. For example, at the *mushāwarah* described above, it was widely accepted that *khurūj* would be the main topic of discussion. The chairman said: "please *syor* your opinion about when is the best time for us to do *khurūj* next month". Then, everyone was permitted to express their opinions. *Syor* begins with the *karkūn* behind and to the right of the amir. This meeting was attended by fifteen to twenty *karkūn* and each of them was required to answer the question. Some elder *karkūn* said, "I prefer to do *khurūj* in the second week of next month, because I do not have any family commitments then". Others said: "We cannot conduct the *khurūj* on those days, because there will be a campaign for the local election in Banda Aceh". The next said, "the day does not matter, what is most important is that we do a good job in remembrance of Allah". Those who agreed did not disturb him when he spoke. Newcomers must also express an opinion, even if in just one word. Sometimes, a newcomer is confused because he does not understand the system and what he should say in the *mushāwarah*.

At this stage of the meeting, *karkūn* listen to each of the members. There is no voting, even if the meeting is deadlocked. In this case, the amir concluded that the *khurūj* would be conducted in the second week of the following month. After everyone gave his *syor* about the date for it, the amir made a decision based on the *karkūns*' opinions. He took into account all of the ideas, but he made the final decision. When an idea is approved, *karkūn* will say "*astaghfirullāh*" abruptly, which means "we seek the forgiveness of Allah, if this conclusion is not beneficial". *Karkūn* whose ideas are rejected by the chair will recite "*alhamdulillāh*", meaning thanks to Allah, that it is Allah who is thought to be responsible for their decision. When they reach a conclusion, the secretary records it in the book of *mushāwarah*, which I saw in every mosque during my fieldwork.

Next, they discussed the location of the *khurūj*. For *karkūn* at *mohalla* level the target of *khurūj* may be not only a mosque but also a *meunasah* (a village prayer hall). At the meeting I attended, the amir described the mosque and its surroundings. In Aceh, they take into account security

matters, for obvious reasons. The amir shared some of his experiences doing *khurūj*, along with the name of the mosque and the *meunasah*. He said that the *jamā'ah* may go anywhere where there is a group of *karkūn* or at least any members of the group in the village. After that, members of *mushāwarah* discussed the reasons for selecting this particular mosque. Most *karkūn* pointed out that the mosque should have a bathroom and a kitchen. I heard that they would visit a mosque near Cot Me village. When a *karkūn* forgets something, he will recite: "*Allahumma shalli 'alā Muhammad*" (O Allah please send peace to the Prophet Muhammad). After saying this three times, he told the meeting what he had forgotten to mention. For *karkūn*, the date and the location for *khurūj* is very important, because they will then block out those dates. Mostly *khurūj* take place on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays.

When I rejected the decision made by the *mushāwarah* in Sungai Manis, Kuala Lumpur, I was accused of failing to control my *nafsu* (desire). At that time, I tried to challenge the conclusion of the *mushāwarah* with what I thought was a logical argument. This is a bad attitude for *karkūn*. The amir said that if we reject the decision of the meeting we could be linked to the devil. When I pushed my argument in one *mushāwarah*, one *karkūn*, without prior notice, said that I was a friend of *shaitān*. I was very surprised, but I smiled and they understood that I was a newcomer to this *mushāwarah*. However, after the *mushāwarah*, many of them approached me to explain why my attitude was inappropriate according to *adāb mushāwarah*, since one of the rules is that one must not go against the decision of *mushāwarah* and should never push one's ideas onto others. Moreover, according to *adab*, one should not challenge the decision of the amir. He may reach his conclusion without going through the process of *syor*. This meeting sometimes can take more than an hour, sometimes up to three hours.

## *Jorh*: The regional meeting of *Karkūn*

During my fieldwork, a word that I often heard was *jorh*. One *karkūn* recommended that I attend *jorh* in Masjid Sri Petaling, as I might see the power of this movement in Malaysia. Although he did not explain to me what *jorh* was, he gave me the date of the *jorh* in Kuala Lumpur. One month before it was to take place, the *markāż* sent information about it to all the *halaqah* in Kuala Lumpur and Selangor. They also directed the *markāż* in other states to attend this *jorh*. I was told that a respected ulama from Nizamuddin would attend the ceremony and give *bayān* to all *karkūn* in *jorh*.

During *bayān*, *jamā'ah tasykīl* disseminated the information to *karkūn* in *malam markāż*. In this case, they did not use the word *mushāwarah*, calling it *jorh* instead. But later I understood that this is the term for a regional meeting at the *markāż*. The *markāż* invites all *halaqah* to give reports (*karguzari*) on missionary activities during this eighteen-hour *jorh*. In Sri Petaling, the *jorh* took place on 20-21 February 2007. One day before, I came to the mosque as usual. The *jorh* was to take place on *malam markāż*. I arrived at the mosque at noon, when I saw many *karkūns* arriving. Due to *jorh* the situation was different from that on other *malam markāz*. For example, we were not allowed to sleep at the mosque in the morning because the place was being cleaned by *karkūn*.

Those coming from outside Kuala Lumpur had to register their group at the *istiqbāl* (reception) counter. It was a must for *halaqah* in the territory of Kuala Lumpur and Selangor to send a group to the *jorh* to give *karguzari*. Most *halaqah* were represented by *zumindar* (a *karkūn* who takes responsibility at the *halaqah* level) and some *karkūn*. They had to stay at the mosque until the *jorh* was finished. The aims of this *jorh* are described in my field notes as follows:

> Today every *karkūn* should listen to *karguzari* from all *halaqah* in these states (Kuala Lumpur and Selangor). When they arrived at the mosque, they listened to *ta'lim ta'allum*, where a *karkūn* read *Kitāb Fadhā'il 'Amal* (a compulsory book read by Tablighist after prayer and during *mużākarah*).
>
> There are many *jamā'ah* (groups) of *karkūn* as today most *mohalla* in Kuala Lumpur will give details about their *da'wa* activities. If they have problems in their *halaqah* or *mohalla* they might be raised during the *jorh*. The *markāż* will take into account the problems and might forward them on to the *shūra* in Malaysia. There are some important issues when this *josh* starts that are important *ta'lim ta'allum* (intellectual activities). According to the *bayānist*, the Prophet Muhammad more emphasised *ta'lim* in this one *majlis* rather than the forum of *zikr* (a forum where Muslim conduct the remembrance to Allah by reciting special prayers).[4]

---

[4] '*Żikir Allah* is 'believed to be one of the most important fundamentals of proselytising' (Aziz, 2004: 495). On this, see chapter 6. There are some references to the importance of *zikr* in the Qur'an: Sūrah al-An'ām 52: '*wa lā tatrud al-lażīna yad'ūna rabbahum bi-alghadawāti wa 'asyīyi yuridūna wajhahu mā 'alayka min hisābihim min syai' wa mā min hisābika 'alayhim min syai'fatatrudahum fatakūna min al-dalimāt* (Send not away those who call their Lord morning and evening, seeking His Face In nought art thou accountable for them, and in nought are they accountable for thee, that thou should turn them away, and thus be (One) of the unjust). Surah al-Shūra 110.

> According to *bayānist*, this *jorh* is intended to worship Allah. Our meeting and ending are due to Allah. Allah will reward all good things (*'amal shaleh*) and the intentions (*niyyat*) for those coming to this *jorh*. The foundations of these intentions are Allah and we will learn piety and the self reform of humankind (field notes 10 February 2007).

This message pointed out the ideals of *jorh*. But, the real situation tells a different story. The ritual began after late noon prayer (*'ashar*). One of the *karkūn* then read *Fadhāil Amal*, while others joined the forum by listening to the message of the book. Most of the *karkūn* from Kuala Lumpur and Selangor arrived in private cars. Many street markets were open on the road to the mosque. Most *karkūn* came not only for the *jorh*, but also for *malam markāż*. The *jorh* started the next day at 9 a.m. The older *karkūn* invited many members to attend the ceremony in the main hall of mosque. Before the meeting started, there was a *bayān*. The *bayānist* simply told the *karkūn* about the importance of the ceremony. He reminded the forum about fear of Allah and *kiamat* (the hereafter). The *bayān* lasted for only ten minutes, just long enough to attract the *karkūn* to the forum. They were told that the *jorh* would take eighteen hours. It was strongly recommended that people only leave the mosque during the *jorh* to go to the toilet or for meals. However, at noon, most *karkūn* who lived locally went back to their houses. Moreover, I saw many *karkūn* chatting around the market. Some of them did not even pay attention to what was going on in the mosque.

After the *bayānist* finished, *karkūn* put two chairs in front of the *jamā'ah* in the main hall of mosque. Two chairs usually mean that there is to be a *bayān* in two languages (English or Urdu, then translated into Malay). The first chair was for the *bayān*ist, another one for the translator. But, in this case, the chairs were for the moderator and the representative from each *halaqah* in Kuala Lumpur and Selangor territory. The moderator, a senior *karkūn* in his sixties, was from the Sri Petaling *markāż*. He looked like a Malaysian Indian and could speak Malay. He asked each *halaqah* to prepare their report (*karguzari*). The moderator announced the name of *halaqah* that would give *karguzari*. He asked Klang Bandar, Rawang, Tanjong Karam and Puchong to prepare their *karguzari*.

---

*Qulid'ū Allah awid'ū ar-rahmān ayyammā tad'ū falahu al-asmā' al-husnā wa lā tajhar bishalātika wa lā tughāfit bihā wabtaghi bayn dzālika sabīla* (Say: 'call upon Allah or call upon *rahmān*. By whatever name ye call upon Him, (it is well): for Him belong the most beautiful Names, neither speak thy prayer aloud, nor speak it in a low tone, but seek a middle course between).

This method was not like a formal *mushāwarah*, because during *jorh* there was no session to select an amir and discuss topics, as elaborated above. In contrast, during the *jorh* most of the meeting was controlled by the *markāż*. Thus, unlike *mushāwarah*, here *karkūn* just listened to *karguzari* and *bayān* from *mawlana* or *shūra*. If *mushāwarah* lasts one to two hours, the *jorh* takes two days. Still, the format of the *jorh* was similar to that of *mushāwarah*.

The meeting was open to everyone, but participants may not offer ideas during the *jorh*. The moderator only invited representatives of *halaqah* to exchange *karguzari*. The representatives were asked to reports on *da'wa* activities in the *halaqah*, thus, giving the *markāż* an idea of the strength of their movement at the grassroots level. The reports described the number of mosques in their areas, the number of mosques active in *da'wa,* the number of houses that *ta'lim* (read the book of *Fadhāil Amal*) and the number of *karkūn* doing *khurūj* for four months, forty days and three days.

## Conclusion

*Mushāwarah* among *karkūn* can be understood in four ways. The first is that *karkūn* hold *mushāwarah* for every activity. *Mushāwarah* among Tablighists combine religious interests with the needs of *karkūn* on their spiritual journey. For this group, religion is the subject and the followers are the object. The subject needs the object to act in its interest and promises in turn that this will benefit everyone. In contrast, some non-Tablighist meetings that I have attended make religion their object, while the followers are subjects. This is not to say that all rituals in *mushāwarah* must be practiced in a strict way. Membership of *mushāwarah* is open to everyone and any topic may be discussed, but the main aim of *mushāwarah* is to implement the commands of Allah, such as *tasykīl* or *takaza*.

During my fieldwork I attended preparations for weddings, religious activities, family gatherings, NGO meetings, etc. I did not find that any of these forms of *mushāwarah* functioned primarily to fulfil religious needs, rather they regulated or prepared for such activities. Usually the meetings started with the opening *assalāmu'alaykum*. Then the senior person or the head of community spoke about the purpose of the meeting, then everyone could talk. There were no prayers. In one village, I was involved in a wedding party where members of the meeting discussed only the preparations and setup of the committee. The members of the *mushāwarah* were the community, both men and women. They sat separately. During

the meeting, only respected people could raise ideas and decide what the community should do. Another meeting that I attended in a mosque in northern Aceh was to prepare for a religious sermon. Here the meeting took place only when there was a particular matter to discuss. In contrast, among *karkūn,* meetings are scheduled regularly and issues discussed there are "inherited" from their ongoing missionary activities, such as planning to go on *khurūj*, *khidmat* and so forth. Furthermore, the nature of meetings among *karkūn* is unique: when there is an issue to be discussed everyone must state his opinion regardless of his status in the group.

Yet the position of amir is very important, not because of his capacity to influence the meeting, but because he is the master of such ways of making decisions and conducting *mushāwarah*. In the *mushāwarah*s of this movement, the role of the amir was always pivotal. He should not be influenced by individual interests, so that he remains independent. He should also understand how to control a *mushāwarah* but not to dominate it. To *karkūn,* the amir would say, "this meeting is due to Allah and He knows your mind and heart". Thus, if the *mushāwarah* is deadlocked, the amir will ask senior *karkūn* to give motivational talks (*tarhīb* and *targhīb*).

The second way of analysing *mushāwarah* is to examine the different levels of religious experience among the participants. As mentioned above, *mushāwarah* is part of Muslim ritual with some similarities to democracy. However, the participants in a *mushāwarah* are totally homogenous in terms of their interest in the movement. The more they have experienced the movement, the more they advance on their spiritual journey. This affects their status not only in the movement, but also in their community.

Third, it is important to examine the impact of *mushāwarah* on the system of organisation among Tablighists. A most important aspect of the meeting is that the outcomes are not challenged. In this context, the result is also the forging of a link between several groups of *karkūn*. For example, the result of a meeting at the *markāż* is forwarded to a *halaqah* and from there to the *mohalla*. This network of information assists *karkūn* to make their program successfully. However, the results of meetings at the *mohalla* and *halaqah* levels cannot contradict decisions made at the national and international *markāż*. In other words, regulations from national and international headquarters must be taken into account by *karkūn* in the lower levels. Therefore, in every *halaqah* meeting, there will be a *karkūn* who speaks about current information from provincial, national and international *markāż*. It can be said that *mushāwarah* among *karkūn* are about how to fulfil requests from the *markāż*. Thus, meetings in the movement have different functions at different level. At the highest

level, meetings disseminate information and determine the place of *da'wa* around the world. Here, coordination with national *markāż* is very important. In Indonesia, for example, the national *markāż* in Jakarta will establish good relationships with the national *markāż* in Kuala Lumpur.

Finally, we must look at the relation between *mushāwarah* and other Jamā'ah Tablīgh rituals. *Mushāwarah* is a part not only of an organisational system among *karkūn*, but also of a ritual system that must be followed by all members. *Adab mushāwarah* is found only among Tablighists. No other Muslim groups that I have observed have meetings influenced by prayer. *Mushāwarah* for example are always performed after *bayān* or prayer in mosque or *surau*. There is no food or drink to be found, unlike in Aceh for example, where meetings traditionally begin with dinner for all members of the village. After that, the head of village will open the meeting without ritual.

This chapter has explained the process by which members make decisions, solve problems and plan missionary activity at the level of the *halaqah, mohalla* and *markāż*. M*ushāwarah* is a tool for *karkūn* whose religious activities are based on their submission to Allah. Consequently, any problems raised during *mushāwarah* must be solved in the spirit of *lā ilā ha illā Allah*. I would even argue that the journey to reach higher levels of religious awareness among Tablighists is controlled and guided through the processes of *mushāwarah*. Even the contents of *mushāwarah* are similar to the discussion of internal problems and matters of organisation during preparations for *khurūj*.

The next chapter discusses another activity in which I was involved, that is, *ijtimā'* in Pekan Baru. Although unique in some ways, this regional meeting in Sumatra is part of many *mushāwarah* conducted in international, national and provincial *markāż*. The attendees at this festival also began with a small *mushāwarah* in their *mohalla* and *halaqah*. A description of this *ijtimā'* shows more clearly how *mushāwarah* are an instrument of *da'wa*.

# CHAPTER FIVE

# *IJTIMĀ'*

## Introduction

In this chapter I discuss the *ijtimā'*, an Arabic word meaning a gathering, conference or meeting. In the Muslim world, the term is used to describe a large gathering of Muslims for the purposes of worship (*'ibādah*). *Karkūn* in Malaysia or Thailand refer to an international meeting of Jamā'ah Tablīgh as *jorh*, while in Indonesia they might use the word *ijtimā'*. The word can also refer to forms of voluntary worship such as the *hajj* to Mecca and Medina. However, the *ijtimā'* of Jamā'ah Tablīgh in many places – Nizamuddin, Raiwind in Pakistan and Yala in Thailand – are always "spectacularly well-attended [and] have attracted the attention of the media worldwide" (Masud, 2000: vii). Mumtaz Ahmad writes that "the Raiwind International Conference of the *Tablīghi Jamā'at* has become the second-largest congregation of Muslims after the *Hajj*" (Ahmad, 1991: 510).

Here, I differentiate between the terms to distinguish between two types of meeting. The *jorh,* as elaborated in the previous chapter, is held in a mosque and every *halaqah* (a group of *karkūn* under *mohalla*, under a provincial *markāż*) and *mohalla* must report on their *da'wa* activities to such a forum. An *ijtimā'* is more likely to take place in another venue, such as in a field, and there are no *karguzari*. Here, the *karkūn* listen to *bayān* from *mawlana* or *shūra* at the five daily prayer times. A *jorh* lasts for two days, while an *ijtimā'* takes place over a three-day period. The participants in a *jorh* come from states or provinces under one *markāż* which contains no more than 10,000 *karkūn*. By contrast, for *ijtimā'* people come from many countries and they are attended by more than 10,000 Tablighists.

The aim of an *ijtimā'* is to gather all *karkūn* from a single region to spend three days in one place in order send out more *jamā'ah* (groups) to do *khurūj* (Tablighist missions). Thus, the success of an *ijtimā'* is indicated by the total number of *jamā'ah* that subsequently perform four-month *khurūj* in IPB, or forty days. *Ijtimā'* are important because they

show how Jamā'ah Tablīgh organises its members to be sent out to perform *da'wa*. They are also a way to attract *karkūn* to spend their time away from families and jobs, by living, listening, praying and eating together with *karkūn* from other places. As already noted, JT has many ways (*malam markāż, mushāwarah, bayān*) of sending out groups of *karkūn* to undertake *khurūj*, while *ijtimā'* is a method for bringing many groups of *karkūn* from many provincial *markāz*s to organise Jamā'ah Tablīgh rituals by encouraging members to remember the importance of *khurūj*. An impression of *ijtimā'* can be obtained from my field notes recorded during my trip to Pekan Baru:

> *Ijtimā'*: a meeting of Muslims carried out by Jamā'ah Tablīgh to prepare groups of *karkūn* for doing *khurūj*, mostly for four months. In this ritual, there are many programs to enhance the spirit of *karkūn* and non-*karkūn* candidates[1] to go on Tablighist tours of IPB or elsewhere overseas. *Ijtimā'* are held in every state where there are many Jamā'ah Tablīgh groups attended by Tablghist ulama (*mawlana*) from Nizamuddin. This ritual is accomplished in three days and ends with a *bayān* where *mawlana* spells out the special blessing of Allah. *Ijtimā'* can be organised to evaluate the strength of Jamā'ah Tablīgh in a state or province. It also provides an opportunity for the *shūra* to discuss the problems of their *markāz* with *mawlana* in Nizamuddin.
>
> Thus, *ijtimā'* should be well organised and coordinated, because during *Ijtimā'*, more than 13,000 *karkūn* will stay together for three days. *Karkun* who want to do *khurūj* may not go back to their home cities after *ijtimā'*. During the ritual, they will be questioned about their preparations by a group of *karkūn* who manage Tablighists before departing on mission. Nevertheless, *ijtimā'* can also be a place for the exchange of information among *karkūn*. They get to know each other and they might see famous *mawlana* close up. Their informal *karguzari* also take place during the gathering of provincial heads of the Tablighist (field notes 24 July 2007).

In this chapter, I focus on an *ijtimā'* held in Pekan Baru, Indonesia. I discuss the preparations mainly of Acehnese *karkūn* who attended, their involvement in the *ijtimā'* and what they did afterwards. The main argument of this chapter is that *ijtimā'* is an occasion for Jamā'ah Tablīgh rituals such as praying together and listening to *bayān* with elite *karkūn* (*mawlana*) from international headquarters in India to *pikir* (think) and *risau* (hesitate) by praying and listening to *bayān* together. In addition, the *ijtimā' mawlana* from Nizamuddin make direct contact with local *karkūn*

---

[1] *Cakar* is an Indonesian word which means to grab. The acronym CAKAR is for *calon karkūn* (*karkūn* candidate). This is a group of new *karkūn* who involve themselves in the ritual of *ijtimā'*.

rather than, as at international *ijtimā'*, local *karkūn* having to travel to Nizamuddin or Raiwind. I seek to provide a picture of the religious experiences of those attending the *ijtimā'* and also to answer a number of questions about Jamā'ah Tablīgh that I raised in the introductory chapter: What are the sources of *karkūn* views and beliefs, and who and what are the main influences on their ways of life? How does the movement maintain their brotherhood under the same mission (*da'wa*)? In answering these questions, I also investigate how the level of religious awareness in this movement is constructed. Of special importance is the role of *mawlana* in building the ideology and missionary thrust of the movement through an appeal to *karkūn* to donate time, self and money to the movement, which is then interpreted by *mawlana* as a sacrifice in the path of Allah.

## Preparations for departure to Pekan Baru

In mid-June 2007, after leaving Sri Petaling, I went to Indonesia to continue my fieldwork, in Cot Goh, Aceh Besar. While in the Cot Goh mosque, a *karkūn* whom I often met during prayers asked if I were going with them to Pekan Baru? I said: "Yes, sure, why not, but why do we need to go to Pekan Baru?" The *karkūn* answered, "it is *ijtimā'*, like a regional meeting of Jamā'ah Tablīgh in Sumatra. You need to come with us in order to meet *karkūn* from other provinces". This reminded me of an earlier experience in Sri Petaling when *karkūn* asked me to join *jorh*, saying the same thing, adding "you will see the power of this movement in Malaysia". It seems that the time for Jamā'ah Tablīgh to show their power is during *jorh* or *ijtimā'*. The word *ijtimā'* was repeatedly mentioned by *karkūn* during my fieldwork, especially the *ijtimā'* in Raiwind. In 2004, four million Tablighists attended the Raiwind *ijtimā'* (*Berita Harian*, 6 December 2004). Most *karkūn* told me that two things that a new *karkūn* must do are to go on *khurūj* and to attend an *ijtimā'* in Raiwind or Nizamuddin. I would say that through *ijtimā'* Jamā'ah Tablīgh creates the same feeling among *karkūn* by attracting them to one place every year or two.

Not surprisingly, the *karkūn* were very enthusiastic when the date of the *ijtimā'* approached. They often told me how important *ijtimā'* is for their *da'wa* activity. During *malam markāż*, one *karkūn*, using a microphone, said that we must mention the *ijtimā'* at every place where *karkūn* meet. As a result, everyone remembered the gathering and prepared for it. A month before the actual date, during *malam markāz* or *mushāwarah*, they kept asking people to join, asking, "will you go to

Pekan Baru?" 'Have you registered for departure to *ijtimā'*?" To attract new members, they talked a little about *ijtimā'*, but their descriptions were very brief, because they wanted to make the listeners curious enough to join the *ijtimā'*. Most of the stories I heard were about the last *ijtimā'* in Pekan Baru – about the place, the number of participants and how many *mawlana* came from international headquarters. I asked them how *karkūn* organised catering during the *ijtimā'*. I also specifically asked them about toilet facilities. When I asked this question, the *karkūn* would turn to stories about the worst places for *ijtimā'* such as Raiwind or Temboro in Indonesia, where it was very hard to imagine the toilet facilities. I imagined that if the *ijtimā'* for more than 10,000 *karkūn* were held in a paddy field, the problems of cleanliness and safety were as likely to be discussed as the worship itself. When *karkūn* could not answer this question, they ended the story by saying "we must conduct our *mujāhadah* (give our best effort in the name of Allah) during *ijtimā'*".The *markāż* in Cot Goh formed a committee to handle the preparations for travel to Pekan Baru. They sent out the information to all *halaqah* and *mohalla* in Aceh about the coming *ijtimā'* , while some of them also organised a small committee to calculate the number of *karkūn* going to Pekan Baru. Senior *karkūn* with experience of attending *ijtimā'* in Southeast and South Asia said that this *ijtimā'* would not be as big as the international *ijtimā'* in India or Pakistan. They said that almost two million *karkūn* attended the international *ijtimā'*. Usually, as in Bangladesh, the *ijtimā'* is attended by members of the elite such as the president and his ministers.

National and international *markāż* must be informed of the schedule of *ijtimā'*. A *karkūn* disseminates the information around the world at least two or three months before the time of the gathering. In Malaysia, I attended *mushāwarah* at one *mohalla* where they discussed the coming *ijtimā'* in Indonesia. There was a *takaza* (request) for the *karkūn* to take part in this gathering.

The most important part of the *ijtimā'* is the participation of *mawlana* from Nizamuddin. While at the *ijtimā'*, they convey *bayān* over three days to all participants. Those who have already been to IPB will be familiar with *mawlana*'s *bayān*. The fixed timetable enables overseas participants to attend several *ijtimā'* in Indonesia before returning to India. An *ijtimā'* is not considered successful if there are no representatives from the international *markāż*. Thus, the presence of *mawlana* from India is a symbol of the global importance of the gathering.

When I registered my name with *jamā'ah tasykīl*, they informed me that I could choose from three ways of travelling to Pekan Baru. If I joined the *karkūn* in one group, I would pay only 200,000 Rupiah (AUD 30) not

including the cost of meals during the trip. Alternately, the *jamā'ah tasykīl* would organise an air ticket if I wanted to fly at a cost of 600,000 Rupiahs (AUD 80) one-way. Alternatively, I could ride with other *karkūns* in their own cars. For this option, I needed to give my name for administrative purposes. The Aceh *markāż* aimed to send more than 1,000 *karkūn* to Pekan Baru.

Two weeks before departure, I went to the mosque to register. I had decided to go by bus because I thought it would be good to make the journey with a group. I heard that twelve *karkūn* were going to take the flight from Banda Aceh to Pekan Baru. When I met the man in charge at the mosque of Cot Goh, he seemed not to trust me, perhaps because I was not wearing the gameez. He asked "which *mohalla* do you represent?"

I replied, "I do not represent any *mohalla* or *halaqah*, because I live in Cot Anoe village, where there is no Jamā'ah Tablīgh group".

Among *karkūn* in Banda Aceh, Cot Anoe is a village known to be hostile to Jamā'ah Tablīgh. When I mentioned the village, he then questioned me: "Why do you want to join this trip?" I could not answer, because it was very sensitive for me to give my personal reasons. I replied by saying, "I am married to a member of a family in this kampong. I performed *khurūj* in Kuala Lumpur and attended *malam markāz* in Sri Petaling every Saturday night. I come to Cot Goh every Thursday night at *malam markāż*. But, I do not admit that I am a *karkūn* in Cot Anoe".

My answers led to a conversation with him about what I did in Malaysia. How did I come to know about Jamā'ah Tablīgh? What were the reasons for my becoming a *karkūn*? I told him about my journey and why I was interested in this movement. I said that in Southeast Asia, only Jamā'ah Tablīgh ties the ummah under the umbrella of *da'wa*. Other *karkūn* joined our conversation. After ten minutes, there were six *karkūn* behind us. One invited me to have lunch with them. During this conversation I learned that *karkūn* who wanted to go to Pekan Baru had to be members of Jamā'ah Tablīgh.

After that, the *karkūn* said that I could register for the bus trip. I gave him 400,000 rupiah, saying, "*ustāż*, I will join the group going by bus and this is the money for a return ticket". He said: "I receive this money for your trip to Pekan Baru. *Alhamdulillāh* (thanks be to Allah)". I asked him how many *karkūn* would travel to Pekan Baru. He answered that some had not registered yet; they could do so as late as two or three days before departure. However, those taking the flight from Banda Aceh to Pekan Baru had to register earlier. One told me that the trip by bus would be a good example of *mujāhadah* (an adjective for *jihād*), because *karkūn*

spend two nights on the bus. Allah will reward them in paradise for every step of the journey.

As in the previous year, the *karkūn* hired two buses. Some *karkūn* maintained that the choice of bus was very important, because most *jamā'ah* require air conditioning. Nevertheless, if the committee chose a bus without air conditioning, they should not complain, because the trip was for Allah. A committee decided to take the cheapest bus so that everyone could afford it.

Three days before departure, I went to the *markāż* at noon prayer time. I did not see the *karkūn* in charge of ticketing. Someone told me that they had still not filled their quota. He told me that *karkūn* would come only on the last day before departure. There were two process of registration. First, those who wanted to go as participants in *ijtimā'* registered; but those who wanted to travel on *khurūj* afterwards were required to register earlier, because the committee needed to conduct interviews (*tafakkud*). I was told that the Acehnese headquarters had proposed that more than 1,000 *jama'ah* who would go only to the *ijtimā'*. It would be amazing to see 1,000 people going to Pekan Baru, but I still did not believe the number. *Karkūn* like to exaggerate the size of such gatherings.

A *karkūn* named *ustāż* Muis told me about going overseas for *khurūj* after attending *ijtimā'*. Before deciding to do this, he discussed it with his wife and sons, telling them that he would sell his motor bike to raise the eight million *rupiah* for the *khurūj*. His family agreed. He said:

> I discussed this issue with my wife. She wanted me to leave some money before my departure. I thought by selling our motorbike, the problem would be solved. I could give her two million for two months. I took six million *rupiah* for my trip to Pekan Baru and the rest for *khurūj*. This idea came during my interview with the *markāż*. They suggested that I discuss it with my family if I needed money. I told the *jamā'ah tasykīl* that I intended to go to Pekan Baru and *khurūj*. The *jamā'ah* said you need to discuss it with your family, but tell them this trip is for Allah.

After he sold the motorbike, he gave the money to another *karkūn* who was in charge of saving money –this is called *amānah* (trust) – for Jamā'ah Tablīgh activities in the *markāż*.

Another impression of the trip came from Jubair, an *ustāż* at the Islamic boarding school in Cot Goh. He told me that he would ask his parents in northern Aceh to lend him money to go on *khurūj* for forty days on foot in Indonesia. Before I knew of his plan, I asked him about whether he intended to go to Pekan Baru. He would not answer, instead saying that he needed go back to his village. After returning, he still could not give an answer but said that he would go to Pekan Baru in someone's car. I

assumed that his parents had not given him the money. Either that or he wanted to save his money for the forty days of *khurūj*.

Another case is Mr. Lazarus. He works as *satpam* (security guard) for a small company in Banda Aceh. He used his salary for the trip and asked permission from his office. He said that this trip was more important than his work. He told me that he was also at the *ijtimā'* at Pekan Baru last year and there he had met many *karkūn* from around Sumatra, Java and the Malay Peninsula. He thought that this *ijtimā'* was very important, because it would increase his commitment to Jamā'ah Tablīgh. During the *ijtimā'*, he said, "we listen to religious sermons (*bayān* or *ceramah agama*) from *mawlana*". He wanted to go on *khurūj* to IPB, but could not afford it. But, he has spent time and money travelling to *ijtimā'* every year since he joined JT in 1998.

In sum, preparations to attend the *ijtimā'* involved four steps. First, there was the dissemination of information to all *karkūn*. During the spreading of the announcement about *ijtimā'*, *karkūn* described the benefits of *ijtimā'*. For senior *karkūn* or anyone who had already been *khurūj* in IPB, this information is seen as a *takaza* (request), meaning, they should respond immediately. The *zumindar* – a *karkūn* who takes responsibility at *halaqah* (headquarters under the *markāż*) – must announce the coming *ijtimā'* in every *mushāwarah* and other ritual (*bayān, ta'lim, mużākarah* and *ġast*). The next step involved setting up a committee of the *mushāwarah*, called the *amānah* section. This section organises the trip and collects funds from the *karkūn*. The committee also has an amir who takes responsibility for the trip. He is appointed by the *mushāwarah* based on his experience and seniority.

During *ijtimā'*, the amir was very busy deciding where to stop for meals and prayer, responding to the personal problems of the *karkūn*, assisting the national *shūra* to find a representative from Aceh for the services during *ijtimā'*, reporting to the amir of Aceh on the progress of *da'wa* to *shūra* and *mawlana*, and conducting a *mushāwarah* to organise the return to Aceh at the end of *ijtimā'*.

Third, the *jamā'ah tasykīl* and the committee try to convince *karkūn* to go on *khurūj* for at least forty days. Thus during *malam markāz*, *bayān* continuously explained the importance of *ijtimā'* for sending *jamā'ah khurūj* (a Tablighist group tour) around the world. For Aceh, the target was one thousand to attend the *ijtimā* , and half of those to go on *khurūj*. When I met the *amīr markāż*, we discussed bringing new *karkūn* with us, as shown in my field notes:

> One day before leaving, I left my house around 4.30 p.m. to go to the *markāz*. Arriving at Cot Goh mosque, I chanced to meet the amir of Aceh,

> a *karkūn* who takes responsibility for all *karkūn* in Aceh, named *ustāż* Ridha. He knew that I was going to Pekan Baru by bus. When I shook hands, he asked me whether I had come with my friend from Cot Anoe. I said "no". He seemed to understand my answer. In fact, all *karkūn* are encouraged to bring new candidates to attend the *ijtimā'*. Thus, during preparation for departure to Pekan Baru, I saw many new candidates for *karkūn* (field notes 24 July 2007).

Fourth, *karkūn* choose the mode of transport to the place of *ijtimā'*. However, the most important issue is the intention to attend, even for those who do not have enough funds to go. In this context, the *tarhīb* and *tarġīb* (motivational talks) are very important. *Karkūn* are told to take into account the reward of paradise from God; in attending they would be giving of their time, selves and funds as a sacrifice to Allah. It is believed that if a *karkūn* even has the intention of going to *ijtimā'*, Allah will reward him in the hereafter. Those with limited funds may make the journey by truck, having only to provide their own food.

## The departure

Before departure *karkūn* must attend *bayān hidāyah*. One day before departure (17 July 2007), I went to the *markāż*, bringing my luggage. Because I would be away for more than three days, I brought three gameez and pants, three T-shirts, three sarongs, my research equipment (camera, digital recorder, batteries, note books), and bedding with a small pillow. I had hoped to find out why *karkūn* said *mujāhadah* (make the best effort in the face of any obstacle) on every occasion in the preparation for the *ijtimā'*. How were the *mawlana* viewed by the members of Jamā'ah Tablīgh? Could I interview them or at least attend the gathering?

I went to the *markāż* by *labi-labi* (a traditional form of public transport in Banda Aceh). When I left my house in Cot Anoe, I did not wear the Jamā'ah Tablīgh accessories. I did not want my neighbours to suspect me of going somewhere with JT members, because I could have problems when I returned. This is because community members are antagonistic towards JT. Many of villagers told me that the movement was an Islamic deviant group and its members would go to hell. I told them only that I would be away in Pekan Baru for several days.

My *labi-labi* was full of women who had just finished work in Banda Aceh. They looked at me and seemed to understand that I was a *karkūn*. Because the *labi-labi* was going to Cot Goh and because I carried hand luggage, they asked me: "Are you going to Cot Goh?" I replied "yes". They understood that someone on *labi-labi* carrying luggage must be a

*karkūn*. They sat a bit far from me even though we were seated in one line together. When I arrived at the mosque, they smiled, the meaning of which I did not understand.

When I arrived, there were some *karkūn* who had just finished late noon prayer. Others sat at the table of the *istiqbāl* (receptionist). I told one that I was ready for the trip. He asked whether I would go on *khurūj* after the *ijtimā'*. I said: "I am planning to do *khurūj*, but I will decide in Pekan Baru". I suspected that the *markāż* hoped many *karkūn* would decide to go on *khurūj*, even at this late date. As departure was planned for tomorrow, I thought the *markāż* would do some rituals before trip. At 5.45 p.m. there was an announcement about the *bayān* from a *karkūn*. He invited us to sit in the main hall of the mosque. There was no specific announcement for those going to Pekan Baru, but all *jamā'ah* sat in front of him. He began a *bayān* on the important of remembering Allah at all times of life. Allah has created this earth by His own intention and it is our obligation to worship Allah. All human activities must be based on the *kalīmah* (sentence): *lā ilā ha illā Allāh* (there is no god but Allah). During the *bayān*, the *karkūn* came into the mosque one by one. Many of them carried luggage and bedding. After putting their equipment down, they joined our *bayān*. The *karkūn* who delivered the *bayān* kept to his message, telling us of the importance of missionary activities as part of worship of Allah. *Da'wa* can be done if we make our best effort on this path. Tomorrow, he said, is our journey to Pekan Baru to meet the *mawlana* of Nizamuddin.

At night, more *karkūn* came to the mosque. I heard that eighty were going by bus. In addition, twelve were flying to Pekan Baru. However, I did not find out the number travelling by private car. Some *karkūn* even said that tomorrow, the day of departure, more *karkūn* would come to the mosque to join the trip. At night, most *karkūn* rested, because tomorrow would be a long journey. However, I was approached by some young *ustāż* from the mosque. They told me about *ijtimā'* in Indonesia and Bangladesh. One informed me that the *ijtimā'* in Raiwind needed more *mujāhadah*. He had attended the *ijtimā'* in Raiwind twice, with more than two million Tablighists. In Indonesia, he added, the place which most needs *mujāhadah*, the *ijtimā'* was in Temboro. By saying this, he was telling me about the spiritual and emotional significance of these gatherings and that everyone should understand that *ijtimā'* is not for tourism, but for *da'wa* and spiritual needs.

As usual, after morning prayer there was a *bayān*. After that, some *karkūn* went for a shower, while others went back to sleep. I had breakfast at a restaurant in front of the mosque. During the *bayān*, a *karkūn* announced that we would depart at 9 a.m. He said that the *jamā'ah* would

separate into two groups. He called our names on the list to separate into two groups. I was in the first. After we sat in our group, a *karkūn* informed us the name of the amir for our trip.

I looked at my group to see whether I knew any of the faces. I saw some younger *karkūn*, but the group was dominated by seniors. Some *karkūn* who came from the same kampong were not in the same group. They approached the committee to ask if they could be in a group with their friends. Others came saying that they wanted to sit behind the driver or at least in the second row of seats. A *karkūn* said to me that it is very hard to organise *karkūn* in a group. But, I said, we did have a *mushāwarah* before this trip. He said: "Yes, but in this case *mushāwarah* was not the issue. They want to follow their *nafsu* (desire) before the ritual of *ijtimā'*". I noticed that those asking for special privileges were newcomers, or senior *karkūn* who had brought new members and wanted to help them during the trip.

After we sat in the group, it was announced that the *karkūn* should be in the main hall of mosque to listen to *bayān hidāyah* at 8.30 a.m. After this, I went outside to observe the surroundings. There were some private cars, trucks, pick-ups and vans parked in front of the mosque. Many *karkūn* were setting up plastic covers over the trucks. In the cars were luggage, food, mineral water and bedding. A *karkūn* said that this is a real *mujāhadah*. He added that the cars without air conditioning would get cooling from Allah. I could not imagine how they could sit for eighteen hours in these vehicles, protected from the rain by only the plastic sheeting. Those taking private cars still wanted other *karkūn* to join them. For some, this was not their first trip to *ijtimā'*, so they knew what had to be done.

At 8.30 am a call on the loudspeaker came for us to go into the mosque to listen to *bayān hidayah*.[2] One by one the *karkūn* returned to the main hall. One *karkūn* sat on a chair and started the *bayān*, which was about the essence of missionary activities. The activities, he said, are from Allah and not for human concerns. The *karkūn* who make this trip are selected by the Lord in the world, because everyone has the same thing in their heart, so we see it as another journey in the path of Allah. He added that every human has funds, self and time, but not everyone could join this gathering because Allah has not appointed them to be with us. We leave our beloved families to go on the path of Allah. He has put in Paradise those who are going for *khurūj*. After this message, the *bayānist* provided information about the trip and our destination. *Karkūn* should keep their *niyyat*

[2] *Bayān hidayah* is a bayan before departing to go on *khurūj* or *ijtimā'*.

(intention) in this journey just for Allah. They must not go against the decisions or directions of the amir. If there is a *takaza*, *karkūn* should take into account commands from Allah. During the *bayān*, *karkūn* listened seriously. The *bayān* was closed by a prayer asking Allah for a safe journey to Pekan Baru.

While the *bayān* was being delivered, most *karkūn* were busy with their preparations. I saw many of them still registering their names with the committee. When the *bayān* finished at 9.00 a.m. the *karkūn* were waiting for the bus. The bus came at noon. The *karkūn* were then separated into two groups, each in the charge of an amir. My group was headed by *ustāż* Jumali who had attended many *ijtimā'*, not only in Indonesia, but also in Pakistan. He also became the amir for the *karkūn* from Aceh. So we had a leader with two jobs, meaning that he was also in charge of choosing the route. He was assisted by the committee. The committee had already informed the *karkūn* in Pekan Baru about the departure of *jamā'ah* from Aceh.

After we had assembled in front of the main gate of the mosque, we were called one by one to be seated on the bus. When the bus departed, most recited *alhamdulillāh*. Behind me was a man named *ustāż* 'Umar, a teacher at a senior high school near the district of Montasik. He shook hands and introduced himself to me. During the trip, the passengers began to talk to each other, mainly about their experiences of *ijtimā'* elsewhere in Indonesia. *Ustāż* 'Umar introduced himself as a *karkūn* of five years standing. He also mentioned the word *mujāhadah* to me, saying, "whatever happens to us is a part of *mujāhadah*". I did not him ask the meaning of *mujāhadah*. He only smiled, saying, "the things that you see are not big *mujāhadah* in *ijtimā'*. You will see that the place of the *ijtimā'* is more uncomfortable". I could not wait to see the situation of *jamā'ah* in *ijtimā'*. During the trip he told me about his involvement in Jamā'ah Tablīgh.[3]

Some *karkūn* recited the Qur'an. The amir also gave directions to the *jamā'ah* to read the Qur'an, while others chatted to each other. They started by introducing themselves. Some *karkūn* already knew each other because they came from a different *mohalla* or *halaqah*. I presumed that those sitting in the first and second rows might not understand the rule of travelling in Jamā'ah Tablīgh. A new *karkūn*, for example, not wearing gameez, smoked during the trip. This is usual; most Acehnese smoke on buses, even if the bus is air conditioned. At the first stop, I asked: "We can smoke in this bus, can't we?" I saw many cigarettes under his seat. I

[3] See Chapter 8.

suspected that this was his first trip with the Jamā'ah Tablīgh community. In fact, my question was intended to remind him that this was a no smoking bus. The amir had not stopped this behaviour; he was more concerned with worship and rituals on the trip, like praying together at every stop. I told this to *ustāż* 'Umar, who said: "We must remember *mujāhadah*".

The bus stopped so that the passengers could have meals and pray together. At one stop the amir asked the *jamā'ah* to pray together, but not to eat together. At the first stop, after the *shalāt jamā'ah* (congregational prayer) the *karkūn* went outside the mosque. They separated from their group on the bus. In Sare, for example, most *karkūn* did not eat together. I assumed that this was due to lack of money. Each *karkūn* carried his money in an *unjank* (a small wallet that hangs around the neck). It is well known that food at the places where buses stop is very expensive. Some *karkūn* buy food and eat it outside the restaurant, because this is cheaper. Thus, *karkūn* were not "*karkūn*" in this atmosphere in the sense that they normally follow Tablīgh ritual during eating. Besides eating and praying at the stops, some also took showers, usually waiting a long time in a queue – something Acehnese are not used to doing. I took a shower at two stopping places, though the bathrooms were dirty.

When the bus stopped, the *karkūn* would tell local people that they were travelling to a national Muslim congress in Indonesia, instead of saying *ijtimā'* or jamboree of Jamā'ah Tablīgh. The *karkūn* tend to state their identities as Tablighist. One *karkūn* said, "we are from Aceh on the way to Pekan Baru to attend a Muslim congress". Muslim congresses in Indonesia are more about political issues than religious ritual, for example the Muslim Congress in Yogyakarta held by MMI (Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia, Indonesian Mujahidin Council), where they urged the establishment of an Islamic state and the implementation of Islamic law in Indonesia. In addition, there were other Muslim congresses attended by members of Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia to urge the establishment of an international Islamic caliphate. Thus, I wondered whether, when *karkūn* mention the national congress of Muslim Indonesians in Pekan Baru, this meant that they also wanted to promote these issues. *Karkūn*, however, did not tell the local people about their identity and the aim of *ijtimā'*.

At two o'clock the next morning we arrived in Medan. The bus parked in the Pelangi company car park. Most *karkūn* got off the bus. Some went to *mushalla* (a small place for praying) for *tahajjud* prayer (after midnight prayer with special *zikir*). This prayer is a very important ritual among Muslims, because during it, Muslims can make requests fromAllah. And, it is widely believed that such requests are sometimes answered. It is also

recommended that this prayer be performed at a very high level of contemplation and Muslims usually cry when praying. *Karkūn* did not spend a long time on their *tahajjud* prayers. After an hour and a half at the company car park, the bus departed to Pekan Baru.

The next ritual was the performance of *shalāt subuh*. One *karkūn* told me that he was disappointed about the drivers, who did not join the *karkūn* during prayers. "We seek for Allah's help for a safe journey", he added. If the group had an accident on the trip, Allah would forgive the *karkūn*. For their entire journey, *shalāt* is very important as this is the second pillar of Islam. There is a tradition among bus companies in Aceh to stop the buses during the prayer time. However, mostly the drivers do not perform the prayers. *Karkūn* did report on the attitude of the driver to the amir, but I did not see anyone approach the driver himself. During prayer time, the driver just sat in his seat.

Once, the bus stopped in northern Sumatra, known to be dominated by Christian-Batak. Here, the amir asked the driver to stop the bus only at Muslim restaurants which had a place to pray. Bus companies in Aceh on trips to Jakarta,[4] make special pre-arranged stops. The *karkūn* got off the bus and inspected the food and the prayer room. If they saw that the restaurant was good and clean, this meant that the food was expensive. So, the only way to eat was to buy food and eat outside. During the stop, the amir announced the time limit and attitudes of the *karkūn*.

We stopped at a restaurant for noon prayer. Behind the restaurant, there was a mini-market with a young woman as the shop keeper. We were not allowed to enter the market with our slippers. She said: "Please take off your sandals before you come in". We obeyed, but others would not enter. However, the amir asked us to put our slippers back on, saying "this is not a mosque, where we need to take off our sandals and shoes". Because he was an amir, the *karkūn* put on their sandals and entered the mini-market. I saw that he gave this guidance by looking at every *karkūn* individually. This is part of the Jamā'ah Tablīgh attitude, that is, always to respect people.

---

[4] There are three Acehnese bus company running trips to Jakarta: *Pelangi, Kurnia,* and PMTOH. These buses stopped at special restaurants appointed by the management. At these stops the drivers get their meals free, while the passengers must pay for very expensive food. I was told that the reason why the food was very expensive was because the management covered the bus crew's meals. Besides the food, the bus crews could take cigarettes, energy drinks, and some mineral water free of charge. They also have special tables in the restaurant and a special bathroom.

We continued on our way to Pekan Baru city. Once the bus approached the city, the amir coordinated with other buses to find out where the *ijtimā'* was taking place. To reach the area, the bus had to go to the city terminal, where *dalīl* (guides) were waiting for us. *Dalīl* waited at every meeting point in Pekan Baru: the bus terminal, the airport, the port and on the city border. We arrived in the city at 8.30 p.m. When the bus stopped at the terminal, there were many *karkūn* whom I believed were *dalīl*. Some *karkūn* from Aceh got off the bus to meet them. They shook hands and hugged each other. Then, some *dalīl* took their cars and followed them. I heard that the place of *ijtimā'* was only thirty minutes from the terminal.

The trip had been very tiring and sometimes tested our patience. During it we did not sleep, while some *karkūn*s chatted on the bus. However, by saying the word *mujāhadah*, our problems were solved. After two days of travel and three days of the *ijtimā'*, I consistently heard the word *mujāhadah* used, as in the following experiences recorded in my field notes:

> In fact, the word *mujāhadah* in Jamā'ah Tablīgh can be defined as someone who follows the *tablīgh* (mission) who gives their best effort to reach a situation where *imān* (faith) is in their soul. In addition, there is a serious challenge in the ritual which needs patience, due to Allah. There are three kinds of influence of *mujāhadah* in this ritual. First, when the *karkūn* has no good choices in a given situation. For example, they should use the "emergency toilets", which are terrible and upsetting to new members. Sometimes, they did not bathe, because of the shortage of water and facilities. Lack of water was one problem which led *karkūn* to talk about *mujāhadah*. Fitan, *a karkūn* who had attended *ijtimā'* in Temboro and Raiwind, described the water problem during the *ijtimā'* and told me that they did not shower for three days because there was not enough water for the 100,000 people who attended the *ijtimā'* . Second, when *karkūn* have to sit for two and three hours to listen to the *bayān*, especially in the early morning after performing the morning prayer; or, when they conduct *mużākarah* (a study group after breakfast), where some *karkūn* were sleepy. In *bayān shubuh* during the *ijtimā'*, *karkūn* were repeatedly reminded not to sleep and the fight against sleepiness they saw as part of *mujāhadah*. Third, *mujāhadah* or a group on *khurūj* who travel on foot and do not receive a warm welcome also speak a lot of *mujāhadah* (field notes, 23 July 2007).

The *karkūn* tended not to be strict with their new members over ritual regulations during travel. They are received as new family members who should be respected. I suspected that this would make the new members feel comfortable with *karkūn*. Senior *karkūn* or others are expected to follow the regulations of the *jamā'ah* perfectly. However, during the trip,

their behaviour sometimes went against regulations regarding *ikrām muslimin* (respect for other Muslims).

## The setting

Once we arrived, we got off the bus. The parking area was opposite the main site of the *ijtimā'*. Many *karkūn* took charge of parking. Because the bus would go back to Aceh, it parked only a few minutes. After that, our group was received by the *istiqbāl* and proceeded to the main gate of the *ijtimā'*. The setting was the Islamic boarding school (*pondok pesantren*) of Dārul al-Qur'ān. At the main gate, some *karkūn* received our group. Our amir then registered the group from Aceh. They recorded the total number of *jamā'ah* and the name of our leader. Thus, every *karkūn* who came this *ijtimā'* had to be registered according to their place of origin. The aim was to place *karkūn* together in tents according their place of origin.

Photo 8. The site of *ijtimā'* in Pekan Baru (author, 2007).

### *Istiqbāl*

The *istiqbāl* section welcomes guests, guides them to the place of *ijtimā'*, handles tickets for *karkūn* and registers everyone who comes to the arena. It consisted of two short tables manned by four or five people. *Karkūn* who came from inside Riau and Kepulauan Riau (Riau Island province) were registered by one *karkūn*. One or two others guided those who had registered to the sleeping quarters. Those who came from other provinces registered with another *karkūn* who wrote down the total number of *jamā'ah* and the name of the amir. The last person calculated the total number of daily visitors. I was told that 9,450 *karkūn* were in the *ijtimā'*. But the *istiqbāl* informed me that this did not include up to 3,000 unregistered visitors.

They worked under the coordination of *amīr istiqbāl* (chief receptionist). They distributed *dalīl* to every meeting point in Pekan Baru city, guiding *karkūn* from outside Riau province to the site. *Amīr istiqbāl* was a senior *karkūn*, in his forties. Using a mobile phone, he called all *dalīl* when a guest arrived. *Dalīl* may not always guide the *jama'ah* to site, sometimes only giving directions. But, for special guests – *mawlana* or *majelis shūra* – *dalīl* along with senior *karkūn* pick them up from the terminal. If the *amīr istiqbāl* left the section to meet someone in the city, he appointed a *karkūn* to be his deputy during his absence. Thus, the place of *istiqbāl* always had an amir who coordinated the situation at the *ijtimā'* location. This authority included chairing *mushāwarah*.

### *Kitchen*

On the way to the tent, opposite the *istiqbāl,* there was a big kitchen where *karkūn* cooked for more 12,000 people for the three days of rituals. The cooking staff were *karkūn* who had volunteered for this duty. They cooked for *karkūn*, guests and *mawlana*. During the first night, *karkūn* were invited to do *khidmat* at the kitchen. I was told that at least sixty people were needed. They cooked rice and other dishes (*lauk pauk*) on a wood fire behind the main gate. During the *ijtimā'* they sold a set of *ta'ām* (a big plate) for 6,000 Rupiah (AUD 1). Usually, one *ta'ām* was enough for three or four people. Participants had to buy coupons before mealtimes, for which they queued in front of the kitchen at breakfast, lunch and dinner time. However, special *karkūn* such as *ahli shūra*, *mawlana, khawwas* (invited guests who are not *karkūn*) did not have to pay for meals. In addition, they were served by *karkūn*, which meant that they did not queue; instead, *karkūn* brought food to their rooms. However, every participant was expected to eat in the Tabligh way with a big plate. Special *karkūn* also were served with additional refreshments such as milk, tea, coffee and bread. *Mawlana* could request meals from the *ijtimā'* committee.

### *Bazaar*

Behind the kitchen there was a bazaar, in an alley which formed a ring road around the site. This is typical of all Jamā'ah Tablīgh gatherings. I participated in many JT activities in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand and these local traders tend to open what are called *warung dadakan* (emergency restaurants) selling noodles, fried rice, drinks and traditional

food. I gathered from their accents that they came from Pekan Baru and Padang. They sold their merchandise from morning until late at night.

Photo 9. The Bazaar at *ijtimā'* in Pekan Baru (author, 2007).

In fact, there was no *ijtimā'* program in the bazaar. The merchants were not allowed to do business in the arena of *ijtimā'*. But *karkūn* traders did sell items such as the Qur'an, gameez, religious books, perfume, etc. This group came from many places in Sumatra and Java. The things that they sold came from Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, India and Pakistan, especially perfume produced in South Asia. Among *karkūn*, transactions took place as they did in the era of the Prophet in the sense that when they received money the traders always said *halāl* (permitted) and *ikhlāṣ* (sincere) and the buyer replied likewise. Finally, they shook hands as a symbol of transaction. Both recited *al-hamdulillāh* (thanks be to Allah) to thank Allah for the transaction.

During the *ijtimā'* the bazaar was open for eighteen hours. The *karkūn* only visited the market after prayer times. Those familiar with the area understood what to buy and how to negotiate with the traders. Newcomers had to buy the book of *Fadhāil 'Amal* about how to do *khurūj*. This aimed to make them more familiar with Jamā'ah Tablīgh teachings. They also bought Tablighist clothing, and other accessories and products. Prices were relatively low. A *peci* (a prayer cap) cost 15,000 rupiah. A gameez and trousers cost only 25-35,000. But food was very expensive. It can be said that the local owners of "emergency restaurants" took the opportunity to charge more because it was only for three days.

## *Amānah*

To the left of the kitchen there was an area of *amānah* (trust) where valuables such as money and electronic devices could be left during the *ijtimā'*. This section was opened only until noon. Most *karkūn* put their money here, because participants were encouraged not to leave valuables in their luggage. During the *ijtimā'*, announcements were made about safety, telling participants that not every one was there to worship – among us there were thieves and pickpockets. I was told about the theft of electronic devices such as mobile phones, portable music players, digital recorders and cash. This announcement was also directed at those going on *khurūj* who had brought lots of money. At the *amānah* they recorded the name of the owner, received the item and put in a safe place. This section also conducted *tafakkud* (interviews) of those preparing to go on *khurūj*, so that *karkūn* could save their money daily or monthly to reach the total amount they needed. Thus, in the *ijtimā'* the section played a similar role to that of the *amānah* at the *markāż* level.

## *The administration of ijtimā'*

The *ijtimā'* administrative centre controlled all activities. There were many *karkūn* in this building since they also had to coordinate with *shūra* and *mawlana*. This building was very close to the place where the *shūra* and *mawlana* stayed. In these buildings there were many *karkūn* acting as security guards. They did not carry weapons, but they checked everyone wanting to enter the buildings. I had a chance to enter the building where *mawlana* sleep. My impressions were recorded in my field notes:

> I was invited to a *bayān 'ashar* in a building, which I knew was a special place for *mawlana* and *shūra*. Many Indonesian and Malaysian senior *karkūn* lived with the *mawlana*. They were helped by *karkūn* who were *khidmat* (servant). During the *ijtimā'* they conducted daily *mushāwarah* in this building. So, the only way to be closer to this VIP group was to be a *khidmat* or provincial amir. To be *khidmat* here was not easy, because as a minimum one had to have travelled to IPB or done forty days *khurūj*. An Acehnese *karkūn* who gave *bayān hidayah* before our departure served as *khidmat* for *mawlana*. The sleeping room were special compared with those elsewhere. They slept in a barracks, while ordinary *karkūn* slept in plastic tents. They had beds, while *karkūn* slept on the ground. They had good toilet facilities, while *karkūn* went to "*mujāhadah* toilets". Ordinary *karkūn* pray under a tent, the *mawlana* and the *shūra* have carpet tents like those used for wedding parties, connected to their bedrooms, and had beautiful accessories. In this hall there were two

microphones and a sound system for prayer and *mushāwarah*. On every side of the room there were many fans. I did not feel *mujāhadah* in this building. I was surprised with this luxury, because *mawlana* teach us to live in an ascetic way. They sometimes mention the lives of the *sahabat* (the Prophet's companions) as the examples of a simple life.

The attitude of *mawlana* also lead me to re-think the role of *mawlana* in this *ijtimā'*. A *mawlana* from Malaysia, for example, was not interested in talking to me because he did not know me. However, when someone introduced a young *karkūn* to him by saying that he was a *pesantren* student, *mawlana* touched his hat to bless this student. The *mawlana* spoke in Urdu. I tried to speak with him in Malay, but he did not answer my question when I asked where he lived in Kuala Lumpur. He did not want to speak with me. I thought maybe my attitude was not like a young student, and that the first time I met him I should have kissed his hands. I pushed myself to sit in front of him and waited to see what happened if I did not shake and kiss his hand. It seemed he dids not want to speak about anything with me. His friend, a *mawlana* from India, was not able to speak English, and I could not converse with him in Urdu. In this building most conversations were in English and Urdu. Many young *karkūn* want to be *khidmat* to their *mawlana* (field notes 24 July 2007).

During *ijtimā'*, all *bayān* were delivered by *mawlana*, and during noon prayer *bayān* were given by *majelis shūra* from Indonesia and Malaysia. When a *mawlana* presented his talk he was always accompanied by a *karkūn* who acted as translator. The *mawlana* was very hard to approach because he was always guarded by senior *karkūn* or *khidmat mawlana*. If a *mawlana* gave a *bayān*, other *mawlana* sat on the main stage with bodyguards, so that no one could sit behind them. The *mawlana* were the centre of attention for all participants. They did not join in ordinary conversation and spoke to the other *karkūn* only during *bayān*. Only *karkūn* who were *khidmat* or amir could talk to them. There were two reasons for this: first, the hierarchy among Tablighists means that the longer one is involved in the movement, the higher the stakes they receive during the *ijtimā'*. New members may not take part in *khidmat*. Being close to the *mawlana* is considered a good experience for *karkūn* because when they come back to their *markāz* or *mohalla*, they can tell *karguzari* (stories) about their spiritual experiences. Second, most *mawlana* were from India or Bangladesh and do not speak Indonesian or English. This problem is evident during the *bayān* and other conversations. Most *bayān*s were delivered in Arabic or Urdu. Translators were graduates from India, Pakistan or Bangladesh, some of them students as well as *karkūn*. Being fluent in Arabic and Urdu is a mark of privilege in the Jamā'ah Tablīgh

community in the sense that it enables one to become a translator during *bayān* or conversation with *mawlana*.

### *The Toilet*

Behind the administration building there were many toilets. If *karkūn* only wanted to urinate, he said "one". Otherwise, he said "two." Those who want to "one" are given a bottle of water; those who say "two" are given more. During *ijtimā'*, I did not like to approach this place, as I had a friend who was "disgusted" whenever he went. *Karkūn* repeatedly recited the word "*mujāhadah*" to encourage themselves whenever they entered the toilet. An emergency toilet was located about two hundred metres north of the main stage. On the first day of the *ijtimā'* I went there to urinate, but it was so dirty that I abandoned the idea. I told the *karkūn* that I had changed my mind. He seemed to understand my reaction. I thanked him and gave back the water bottle. Because of that situation I did neither "one" nor "two" for a day. I understood that the other toilet was off-limits to ordinary *karkūn* and there was a 24-hour security guard near the place. I was shocked at this situation, because I could not imagine not going to the toilet for three days, although I did not tell my friends who slept behind me.

### *The tent of ijtimā'*

The main place was designed for the ritual of *ijtimā'*. It was a series of large tents which together could accommodate more than 12,000 *karkūn*. They were separated into provinces in Sumatra. Each tent could hold more than one thousand people. The tents were made of plastic. They employed more than forty unpaid *karkūn* to make the tents. This was the largest place for praying that I have ever seen in Indonesia. However, I heard that for other *ijtimā'*, like in the one Jakarta in the same year on 3-5 August, the tents could accommodate more than 80,000 *karkūn*. While I was praying at the back of the tent, I could not see the main stage. In between provincial tents was a big loud speaker, so that during *bayān* and praying, the *karkūn* could listen to the message properly. But *karkūn* were encouraged to sit near the main stage and leave their belongings behind.

Compared with the facilities for the elite, the tent was really needed by the *mujāhadah*, especially when the rain came. When I was in the *mawlana*'s building, it was raining. A Malaysian *mawlana* told his friend that they were lucky. But, he said, "what about our *karkūn* outside?" His friend who was also a *mawlana* did not answer, but only smiled. I interpreted him to be saying that if they wanted to be in our building, they

should follow our example by becoming being *karkūn*, which we call *istiqāmah* (consistent).

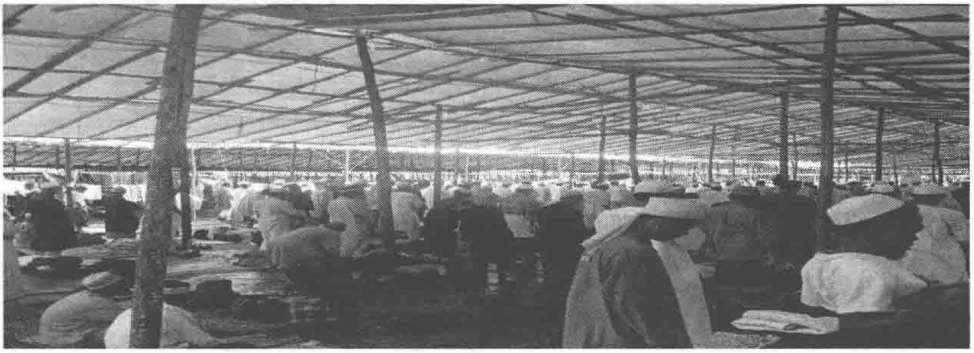


Photo 10. This picture was taken 300 metres from the main stage during late noon prayer (author, 2007).

Photo 11. *Karkūn* rest and listen to *bayān* in a provincial tent (author, 2007).

The picture above shows the belongings brought by *karkūn* to the *ijtimā'*. Every *karkūn* must carry his needs for 2-3 days, unless he is planning to go on *khurūj*. They sleep in the prayer lines. Tony, a *karkūn* from Johor and an *ustāż* in Cot Goh, Aceh Besar, told me that the situation in Raiwind was much worse. This was also good compared with the *ijtimā'* in Temboro, which was conducted in a paddy field.

The *karkūn* were asked to keep their belongings in their provincial tents, and not to sleep in those of other provinces, because each province had its own *jamā'ah tasykīl, amīr* and *amānah*. Thus, if a *karkūn* had a problem during the *ijtimā'*, they could report to the provincial amir or *jamā'ah tasykīl*. If the problem related to the *ijtimā'*, then the *jamā'ah*

*tasykīl* forwarded the message to the *ijtimā'* staff. This was an efficient way of managing 12,000 people.

During *ijtimā'*, *karkūn* did visit other tents to see their friends. Some had already met each other during overseas *khurūj* or at previous *ijtimā'* in Raiwind or Indonesia. I met several *karkūn* from Java who only spoke Javanese, but they said they originated from Sumatra.

Close to the main stage was the group from Aceh and Lampung (see photo 12), where I attented the ritual of *ijtimā'* and put my luggage and bedding there. From my side, I saw that there was a plastic line above me, where we were not allowed to sleep.

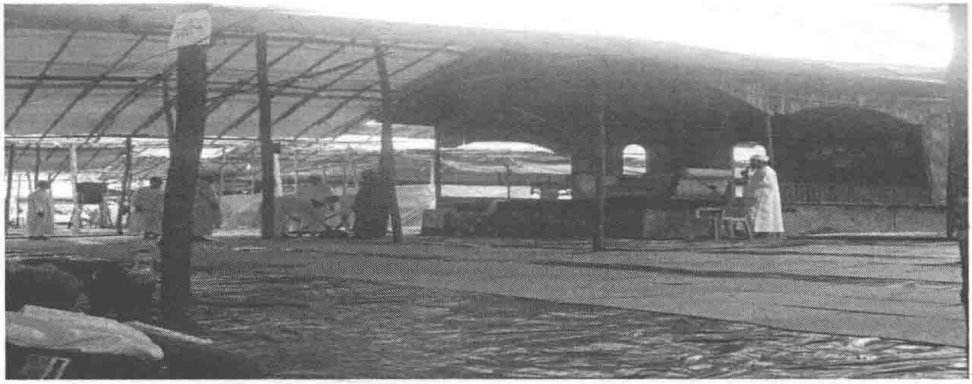


Photo 12. At the main stage of ritual of *ijtimā'* before the prayer (author, 2007).

Photo 13 At the main stage during and after prayer (author, 2007).

I had the chance to stay one night very near the main stage because I was part of the Acehnese contingent. Behind me was a *karkūn* from Johor who was an *ustāż* and one from Jakarta who was also an *ustāż* in Cot Goh. Between us and the main stage was a special row for important peole such as *mawlana*, guests, *khawwas* (intellectuals), *shūra*, foreigners and other invited guests during the opening ceremony from Riau province. There were *karkūn* who acted as security guards to protect this row from ordinary *karkūn*. We could not break this rule because at the start of the *ijtimā'*, the committee had asked for our cooperation in not sitting in this special row. Regarding this special place of prayer and the main stage, I refer to my field notes:

> On the main stage, where *mawlana* delivered *bayān*, there were microphones and a sofa for the *mawlana* and his interpreter. When a *mawlana* gave *bayān*, the other *mawlana* sat behind, on the sofa. The front of the main stage was filled with *karkūn*. They sat very close to each other. This main stage was 6 x 7 meters. There were four special rows for *mawlana*, guests and foreign *karkūn*. At the beginning of prayer, the security "cleaned" the area of ordinary *karkūn*. Thus, the ordinary *karkūn* prayed on their bedding and plastic. On the first day, the special guest was the governor of Riau province.

### *The khawwaz building*

On the first day of the *ijtimā'*, a senior *karkūn* approached me and told me not to sleep in this tent, because I was an intellectual. He said that it was not good for me to sleep there or to use the toilet. He added that I should sleep at the *khawwaz* section of the building just behind the main stage. Inside was a hall that could accommodate all of the guests at the *ijtimā'*. There were no beds but there was a red carpet and fans. This room was for specially invited people such as government staff, intellectuals and senior *karkūn* in Sumatra. I declined the invitation, because I thought it a little unfair on my friends who slept behind me. I enjoyed chatting with them about the *ijtimā'*.

But in the end I moved to the building for the toilets, which were so much better than the others, although I still wanted to spend my time with ordinary *karkūn*. Since this was a special invitation for me, I could not reject their kindness. The building was filled with non-*karkūn*. They wore their own clothes instead the gameez and *surban*. There was a group of senior *karkūn* who were called ulama in their home provinces. These *'ulamā'-karkūn* promoted Tablighist teaching to the guests during the *ijtimā'*. In every informal meeting, the *ulamā'-karkūn* spoke about the

importance of missionary work because of the decline in Muslim worship of Allah.

In this building *khidmat-karkūn* were on duty twenty-four hours a day. They protected the area from other *karkūn* who wanted to enter the rooms and toilets. They checked anyone coming in and if their names were not on the list, then the person would not be allowed in. During mealtimes, food was served by *karkūn*, but the guests had to eat in the Tablighist way. There were four toilets in this building, which were more comfortable than the ordinary ones. All the doors were locked at prayer time. At the main door the security guards kept their eyes on everyone who wanted to approach the room.

For *karkūn* this promotion was very important, especially when the guests are well known people. The idea was to encourage them to support the Tabligh in their area after experiencing the *ijtimā'*. This strategy was never discussed during other meetings among Tablighists, but it is safe to say that this was a conscious method for the promotion of Jamā'ah Tablīgh. When I was in the field, I saw no negative responses from the guests; none of them left until the *ijtimā* was finished. This indicates that *ijtimā'* can be a method of recruiting new members from elite groups. On the second day, the *khawwaz* were invited to meet *mawlana* and *majelis shūra* in their building. It was an honour to sit and listen to the *bayān* in this special room. In this meeting, the *mawlana* discussed the teachings of Jamā'ah Tablīgh.

Finally, a *karkūn* told me that this place was regularly used for *ijtimā'* in Pekan Baru. A *karkūn* from Aceh told me that for him it is not difficult to follow the *ijtimā'* every year because the place and the people were always the same. Seniority in the ritual had nothing to do with age, but with the spiritual journey of participants in the movement. Travelling to IPB, for example, brings special benefits to participants as this is believed to constitute a "bridge" between local and international *karkūn*.

## Conclusion

In this chapter I have discussed the preparations for, travel to and setting of a regional *ijtimā'* in Indonesia. By following a single group of *karkūn* from Aceh, I was able to see that the *ijtimā'* is an instrument for unifying *karkūn* through their common emotional experiences and participation in a single religious mission. Since *pertemuan* (meetings) and *perpisahan* (endings) among Tablighists are thought to be due to Allah, the *ijtimā'* can be seen as means of unifying the aims of heart and soul through the common experience of the *mujāhadah* during the *ijtimā'*.

Travelling from Banda Aceh to Pekan Baru was carried out for Allah, not the individual desires of *karkūn*. As a result, whatever hardships they faced on the journey are believed to be given by Allah. In this sense, Tablighists believe that there is no situation that does not involve the worship of Allah. Just as the Prophet and his companions were tested by Allah to do *mujāhadah* on their missionary activities, so were the Tablighists travelling to *ijtimā'*. *Ijtimā'* is therefore one way of following the Prophet. The activities of the *ijtimā'* include travelling from home to mosque, the passage to Pekan Baru and living in an uncomfortable place. All are seen as important religious activities for a Tablighist. *Ijtimā'* is therefore a symbolic submission to God in the lives of the Prophet Muhammad and his companions.

The status of new members during the trip can be understood as a process of negotiation. They do not tell people that they are from Jamā'ah Tablīgh. This leads to process of assimilation in which *karkūn* behave like ordinary Muslims with common attitudes. However, within their own group, *karkūn* follow the rules called *adab*. Breaking the rules may occur when they are outside the community. In this context, *ikrām muslim* (respect for Muslims) is very important for *karkūn*. They will not stand for overly strict treatment of the members during the *ijtimā'*.

In fact, in Islamic communities, there are many other festivals similar to *ijtimā'*. In an Islamic mystical sect like the Naqsyabandi, this type of festival is called *'urs*, as described Werbners:

> [T]he *'urs* provides a platform for the *'ulama*, it is also an occasion which reinforces the supremacy and autonomy of saints and re-enacts the ambivalent relations of dependency between saint and *maulvi* [cleric], shrine and mosque.
>
> The *'urs* is both a ritual and a giant popular religious festival. It is also the hub of the organizational power of a Sufi regional cult, underpinning its reproduction and enabling its continued geographical extension. These three aspects of the *'urs*: ritual, popular cultural and organizational, are all essentially intertwined. (Werbner, 2003: 242).

In this chapter we have seen that *ijtimā'* is embedded in the negotiation between South Asian and Southeast Asian Islam. The *'urs* is produced by a saint in South Asia which is the same as *ijtimā'*. The rituals in *ijtimā'* are defined by Middle Eastern Islam (such as prayer and homily), but when they are included in the *ijtimā'* they have another meaning. The festival is modelled on South Asian rather than Middle Eastern Islam, the former being influenced by the Hindu caste system. The privileges and security of the *mawlana* show that seniority among *karkūn* generates status differences during *ijtimā'*. This does not occur, for example, during the

*hajj*, where there are no special privileges for prayer at the holy mosque. The higher the status of the religious spiritual journey, the more status *karkūn* gain during such a festival. The centres of attention are the *mawlana* from South Asia along with their "bodyguards" (Southeast Asians who have studied in South Asia). The Urdu language, therefore, becomes an important mode of communication. This is not a product of local culture in Pekan Baru or even in Southeast Asian Islam.

The festival also has aims that are quite different from those of the *hajj*. The *hajj* is part of obligatory worship for every Muslim and it symbolises the experience of Abraham and his son, Ishmael. The objective of the *ijtimā'* on the other hand is to send *karkūn* on *khurūj* to perform *da'wa*. There are also different perceptions among *karkun* of *ijtimā'*. They go to meet their *mawlana* and to listen to *bayān*. During the *hajj*, by contrast, the main aim is to worship Allah in order to enter His paradise (*hajj mabrūr*, the *hajj* that is approved by Allah).

Even though one does not gain a title after returning from *ijtimā'*, as one does upon returning from the *hajj*, *karkun* – especially those who listen to the marathon of *bayān* from *mawlana* of international *markāż* and follow the ritual – still feel reborn as persons. The charisma of the *mawlana* acts as a magnet for *karkūn*, something not found among participants in the *hajj*. As I have pointed out, the *mawlana* produce "religion" for those at lower levels of religious awareness.

Finally, it can be said that the *ijtimā'* is one method for the construction of religious experience among Jama'ah Tabligh members. If there is a problem during the process, it will be solved under the system of *mushāwarah*, as discussed in Chapter 4 above. In addition, the role of *mawlana* in this gathering is as mediator between God's interest and the needs of *karkūn*. Thus, the contents of their *bayān* are likely to be connected to the experience of *karkūn*, especially those who go on *khurūj*.

The next chapter is a discussion of *bayān* (religious sermons) among *karkūn*. In this chapter we have seen how the movement organises and mobilises its followers. In the next, we look at the content of the religious messages that are repeatedly delivered to them. There is, then, a strong connection between the themes of these two chapters in that both show how members of the movement are encouraged by religious means to undertake the primary, we might say defining, duty of a *karkūn*, which is to go on *khurūj*. This chapter has told us about the faith among *karkūn* in establishing their religious journey and the role of *mawlana* among the ordinary *karkūn*. The next chapter describes the content of religious messages that lead *karkūn* to donate their time, selves and money in the path of Allah.

# CHAPTER SIX

# *BAYĀN*

## Introduction

In this chapter I provide an account of my experiences of *bayān*, as a *karkūn* in various mosques in Malaysia (Kuala Lumpur and Selangor) and Indonesia (Aceh and Pekan Baru). *Bayān* can be defined as "clearness, plainness, obviousness, statement, declaration, announcement, manifestation, explanation, elucidation, illustration, enumeration, index, list, eloquences" (Wehr, 1976: 88). The meaning changes when it is preceded by "*al*" (the definite article in Arabic). Thus, Muslims speak of *al-bayān* to refer to the Qur'an. Sometimes the Qur'an is also called *al-furqān* which means "proof and evidence". Thus, in Islamic studies the words *bayān*, *al-qur'ān* and *al-furqān* evoke the explanation of the written word, which is sometimes called "Gods' message". For this purpose, Muslims add the word *'ilm* (science) to *bayān* and speak of *'ilm al-bayān*. This science is the art of speaking, talking and convincing an audience – similar to the science of rhetoric. *Bayān* can be said to mean the art of speaking (or rhetoric) in Islam which relates to *furqān* (proof and evidence) and *qur'ān* (the written word). These meanings are influenced by Muslim tradition because in Islam there are two kinds of evidence in the world: written (*āyah qawliyyah*) and non-written (*āyah kawniyyah*). In this context, Schimmel maintains that:

> For the Muslim, everything could serve as an *āya[h]*, a sign from God, and the Koran repeats this truth over and over again. The creatures are signs; the change between day and night is a sign, as is the loving encounter of husband and wife; and miracles are signs ... they all prove that there is a living God which is the origin of everything. These signs are not only in the "horizons", that is, in the created universe, but also in the human souls, that is, in the human capacity to understand and admire; in love and human inquisitiveness; in whatever one may feel, think, and experience (Schimmel, 1994: xii).

Thus, *bayān* is about explaining both written evidence, which is found in the Qur'an and Sunnah and non-written evidence on earth. As such, explanations are closed by the words *lā ilā ha illā Allah* (there is no God but Allah). Tablighists use this method of explaining written and unwritten evidence as part of their effort to fulfil the purpose of a human being, which is to be "*ibād ar-rahmān*" ( slaves of God).

Most of the *bayān* forums that I attended ended by asking *karkūn* to disseminate the message that "there is no God but Allah" (*lā ilā ha illā Allāh*) through *khurūj*. This sentence, according to Masud, is "a way that prepares a Tablīghī for his and her total commitment to the *Jamā'ah* program" (Masud, 2000: 21). The *khurūj* is depicted as a means of spreading the message (*lā ilā ha illā Lāh*) when the benefits of missionary activity are addressed in a *bayān* forum. Thus, during khurūj, *bayān* is an important part of Tablighist ritual, especially during *maġrib* prayer, where many local people pray in mosques or *surau*. Thus, the role of the *bayānist* is very important, because he must persuade his audience of the mission of *lā ilā ha illā Allah*.

This chapter describes my experience of *bayān* as a Muslim, *karkūn*, *bayānist* and researcher. It provides a gateway to understanding first, how the religious person produces his or her religious understanding, and second, how this is transferred to those who are listening. As discussed below, there is also evidence in *bayān* of a differentiation in religious awareness among the members of Jamā'ah Tablīgh. Accordingly, some *bayānist* demonstrate greater religious awareness than their audience and for this reason *bayān* is one mechanism through which senior members can influence the attitudes and behaviour of junior members. Importantly here, *bayān* is the principal way in which Jamā'ah Tablīgh encourages its members to leave their worldly activities to becomes "slaves of God".

In this context, I assume that I was, myself, a "slave of God" during the times I was involved in *bayān* forums. Through my own involvement, I tried to understand the nature of *bayān* and how it is that it can influence the members of JT to dedicate their lives to *da'wa* activity. In fact, there are no Jamā'ah Tablīgh activities that do not involve *bayān*, as *bayān* opens and closes, precedes and follows, each of the organisation's regular activities. All *karkūn* who wish to become "slaves of God" are expected to listen to *bayān* before performing certain tasks. In general, a successful *bayān* is one that convinces *karkūn* to give up their time and money to the performance of *da'wa* through *mushāwarah*, *ijtimā'*, *khidmat, jorh* and *khurūj*. To be a *karkūn* is therefore first and foremost to be a good listener at *bayān* forums. This attitude of listening is reinforced by the fact there is no moderator or question and answer session during *bayān*. Debate and

interruption are not allowed. Yet listening to *bayān* is not a passive activity. As one *karkūn* in Kuala Lumpur said to me over dinner in Sri Perdana Baru, *bayān* is like a "battery charge" between man and God. What he meant was that listening to *bayān* was a way to connect the heart and soul of humans to God (Allah).

The message delivered by the *bayānist* is understood by *karkūn* to be the product of his knowledge of religious texts, which he demonstrates by reference to *āyah kawniyyah* and *āyah qawliyyah*. By looking at this process through a theological hermeneutic, I can say that the *bayānist* explains the object of the religious texts during his *bayān* session. This model has long been central to the study of Islam, as noted by Ibrahim M. Abu-Rabi:

> [T]he text (*nass*) has been at the centre of Muslim culture ... both the Qur'an and Hadith form the textual base of Islam, which furnish the main foundations of Islamic theology. Therefore, it may be valid to argue that since the inception of Islam, a dialectical relationship has existed between text and (human) history, and text and human thought ... Muslim history and thought have been the product of a complex interchange between the "human" and the "divine"; or between the religious text and socio-economic and political factors (Abu-Rabi, 2002: 30).[1]

As I discuss elsewhere in this study, most *karkūn* activities are based on concepts such as *mushāwarah*, *ijtimā'* and *markāż*, all of which are derived from Muslim tradition. Yet these concepts need to be understood as second-order processes in comparison with the importance of *bayān*. *Bayān* is like a form of indoctrination; its purpose is to maintain an awareness in the mind of each *karkūn* that *lā ilā ha illā Lāh* is the principal aim of human life in this world. Yet it is also a form of religious experience for Jama'ah Tablīgh members who, through giving and attending to *bayān*, feel themselves connected to the movement and the wonder of the *lā ilā ha illā Allāh*.

In this chapter I examine the delivery of *bayān* in mosques or places of *ijtimā'*. I discuss the way a *bayānist* is chosen, the range of themes discussed during *bayān*, and the audience's behaviour during *bayān*. I describe the activities that follow the delivery of *bayān* and how it is received and acted on by *karkūn*. The subsequent section explores the construction and content of *bayān*. In particular, I discuss the importance of *bayān* as a mechanism for transmitting the central elements of Jamā'ah Tablīgh. The central tenets or "Six Points" of Jamā'ah Tablīgh are core

[1] See also the explication of this argument in Amin Abdullah (2003:1-24) (2000:78-101).

elements of *bayān* and for this reason, I detail each of the central tenets in turn, starting with an examination of how the *lā ilā ha illā Allāh* is constructed during *bayān.* The chapter concludes with an analysis of the major issues that emerged in this study of *bayān*. My argument is that *bayān* is the central activity of Jamā'ah Tablīgh as it is the principle way to motivate, inspire and control the minds and souls of *karkūn*. In this chapter, I answer such questions as "How is religion 'produced' among Jama'ah Tabligh members?" and "To what extent do we need to understand the inner world of *Muslim*s (persons who submit themselves to be 'slaves of Allah' and witness that Muhammad is His Prophet) and *mukmin* (believers)?"

## The process and type of *bayān*

In this section, I describe some of the *bayān* that I observed in various Tablighist settings. The descriptions are based on my experiences as a *karkūn* in Kuala Lumpur, Banda Aceh and Pekan Baru. In so doing, I attempt to define some of the general features of *bayān* as they occurred during my research.

During my fieldwork, I was invited to listen to a weekly program at the *halaqah* level consisting of *bayān* aimed at persuading people to do better conduct and go on *khurūj* for four months, forty days, ten days, or at least three days per month. This was similar to *bayān* at the *markāż* level in Sri Petaling and Cot Goh, held once a week at the *malam markāż*, where the *bayān* was delivered after *maġrīb* and *shubuh*. In contrast, after the late prayer (*'ishā*), *karkūn* listened to the story of the companions of the Prophet as written in the book of *Fadhā'il Amal*. At other times, *bayān* were held during *jorh* and *ijtimā'*, where they were delivered at every prayer time. During *ijtimā'*, this approached something like a marathon of *bayān*, given by *mawlana*. from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. It was only during the late noon prayer (*'ashar*) that *bayān* was presented by local *karkūn* from the national *shūra* or local *mawlana*.

The duration of the *bayān* varied. At the *mohalla* level they lasted only for the time between *maġrib* and *'isha* prayer, approximately 30-45 minutes, as part of the *mohalla* or *halaqah's* weekly *bayān* program. For example, in the *halaqah* in Sri Perdana Baru, a *bayān* was held every Tuesday night, attended by the *karkūn* in the *mohalla*. I was told that this weekly *bayān* was important for strengthening the commitment of *karkūn* in the local area to donate their time and money in the path of God (a central goal of *bayān*). *Bayān* delivered during the *malam markāż* or given by a *mawlana* could last up to one or two hours, especially at the time of

morning prayers. The *bayān* program at the *malam markāż* could also last for several days.

Selection of the *bayānist* at the *mohalla* or *halaqah* level tended to occur immediately after listening to the weekly *bayān*. *Karkūn* would hold a meeting directly after *'isha* prayer, as discussed in the chapter on *mushāwarah*. During this meeting, *karkūn* would select the *bayānist* for the following week. If the one selected came from outside the *halaqah*, he would be informed as soon as possible. The selection and scheduling of the *bayānist* were also coordinated with the *markāż*, which would sometimes send a guest to give the *bayān* in the *halaqah*. For example, while I was in Banda Aceh, a *bayānist* from Malaysia was offered by the *markāż* to a *halaqah*. In Kuala Lumpur, I was invited to attend a *bayān* in one *halaqah* that was to be delivered by a *karkūn* from Australia. At other times, the state *markāż* would approach the national *markāż* to hire a guest (usually a *mawlana*) to give *bayān* in his *markāż* and the *halaqah* within his territory. When I took noon prayer in Sri Petaling one day, I met a *karkūn* from Banting who wanted to invite a particular *mawlana* to deliver *bayān* in his *markāż*.

*Bayān* at the *markāż* level tend to be more carefully planned than those held at the *halaqah* level. In the *markāż*, they hold daily meetings to discuss a range of issues, including speakers for the *bayān* program. Preparations for a particular *bayānist* at the *markāż* level must begin a week or even a month earlier. This is because the *markāż* is a meeting place for *mawlana* from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Most of these *bayān* will last 1–2 hours. The *markāż* will inform their *halaqah* and invite other state *markāż* to join the program. *Karkūn* who had been to IPB were often familiar with the more prominent *mawlana*. For example, some *karkūn* said that when Mawlana Hamid gives *bayān*, everyone feels a "touching at their heart". Or when Mawlana Qismu delivers the *bayān*, many life issues will be made easier through the donation of self, money and time on *khurūj*. In fact, most *karkūn* are familiar with the well-known *mawlana* from IPB.

In the case of *mawlana* from IPB, *bayān* are accompanied by an interpreter as most are delivered in Urdu. The translator should be familiar not only with Urdu but also perhaps the style of the particular *mawlana*. During my *khurūj* (see picture below), a *bayānist* gave his lecture in Urdu and we were lucky that among us was a *karkūn* familiar with the language. During *ijtimā'* in Pekan Baru, the interpreter was a graduate from a madrasah in Pakistan who had been in IPB for several years. This was also the case for *bayān* I attended during *jorh* in Sri Petaling. In Kuala Lumpur it was easy to find an interpreter if the *bayān* was given in English as

many *karkūn* can speak English. In Aceh, however, most *bayān* are delivered in Bahasa Indonesia, not in Acehnese; or, when delivered by *karkūn* from Malaysia, in Malay. However, the translation process is only the medium for the *bayān*. The most important thing, I was told, is that the *bayānist* touches the souls, hearts and minds of his audience.

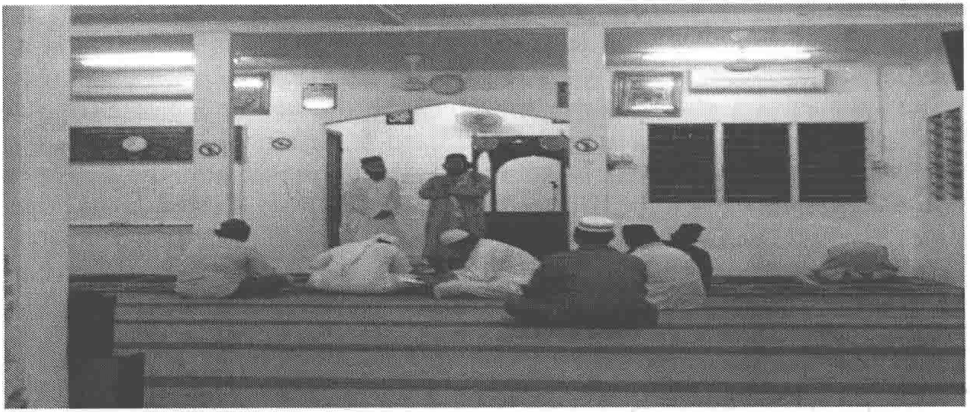


Photo 14. The *bayān* during first my *khurūj* in Sungai Manis, Kuala Lumpur (author, 2007).

The process of selecting people to deliver *bayān* also differs according to the activity and the situation. During a three-day *khurūj*, for example, where there are no more than ten *karkūn*, the *bayānist* is typically selected from within the group during the morning *mushāwarah*. Usually, for the first and second days, the *bayānist* will be a senior *karkūn* or one who has travelled to IPB. For the third day, the group will choose a newcomer. In the first *khurūj,* I was selected to give *bayān* in *khurūj* in Kuala Lumpur and another weekly program at a *mohalla* in Banda Aceh. My first experience of being a *bayānist* was at morning prayer. When we had a meeting, a *karkūn* suggested that I deliver *bayān* on the last morning of *khurūj*. I said that I could not be a *bayānist*, because I was still a newcomer and this was my first time on *khurūj*. But the amir agreed that I should be the *bayānist*. He added that *khurūj* is a process of learning. Thus, he said, we are learning together, including in giving *bayān*. I suspect that newcomers are asked to give *bayān* at morning prayers as typically not many local people pray in the *surau* at that time. One *karkūn* said to me that the most important thing is to deliver the Six Points. We may talk about whatever we want, but it must be under the umbrella of the Six Points. When the time came to give my first *bayān*, I stood in front of

my fellow *karkūn* and started by *salām*. I was very nervous, even though I had delivered sermons before. The difference was that here I had to deliver a religious message according to a strict prescription. I spoke for fifteen minutes and closed with *wassalām*.

My second experience of giving *bayān* was in a *mohalla* in Banda Aceh. I met a *karkūn* who was a member of parliament in Aceh. We had a pleasant conversation during *malam markāż* in Cot Goh. He said that he had been in Australia for a couple of months and in the US, where he took his MA. He spoke English very well and treated me as a friend. He paid for my dinner and gave me his phone number. He told me that in order to solve the problems in Aceh, every officer and district head should do *khurūj*. Although he himself had never done more than a three-day *khurūj*, this was enough to remind him to do good conduct in his personal life and as a contractor in Banda Aceh responsible for many tsunami recovery projects. He invited me to give a sermon (*ceramah agama*) after the *maġrib* prayer in his *meunasah* (an Acehnese term for a small prayer hall). I demurred, saying that I did not have the authority to give sermons (*ceramah agama*), using that term because he had not used the word *bayān*. In response, he said that in his *mohalla* (or *meunasah*), there were no more than five *karkūn* and for this reason, he and his fellow *karkūn* did not refer to these sermons as part of a *bayān* program though that is in fact what he meant. As he explained it, they invite many *karkūn* to give "religious sermons" every Wednesday night as part of a weekly program. He said, "it is hard to call this a program of Jamā'ah Tablīgh, but what we do is a part of the Jamā'ah Tablīgh program". Following this explanation, I accepted his invitation but warned him that I was not expert at giving *bayān*. He replied, "that is OK, just tell us what is the best thing for my community!"

I rode my motorbike to the *meunasah*, arriving just a few minutes before the *maġrib* prayer. This time, I did not wear gameez, because I knew that not all the audience were members of Jamā'ah Tablīgh. I gave a speech on the social problems I had observed in Banda Aceh, such as the degradation of morality and why Muslims tend to forget their creator. I also talked about how people in this world have come to consider men and women as their idols, and about the decline in the importance of family and religion as people are drawn by the power of money. I did not realize that my "*bayān*" had lasted for almost an hour. The audience seemed to enjoy it but I was not sure whether they were following my "*bayān*" or merely waiting for the *'ishā* prayer. This experience gave me a chance to observe them more closely. People sat in their prayer lines, with the women sitting behind the men. I saw some of their faces and tried to

maintain eye contact with them. During my travels in the field, I had never seen women in a Jamā'ah Tablīgh forum. It seemed that *bayān* were only for men, unlike this "religious sermon" for which the audience was composed of both men and women, sitting separately. Another difference was that for *bayān* most of the audience sit close to one another (see the picture below and also pictures in the Chapter 5), while here the audience tended to sit where they wanted, although the men and women were separated.

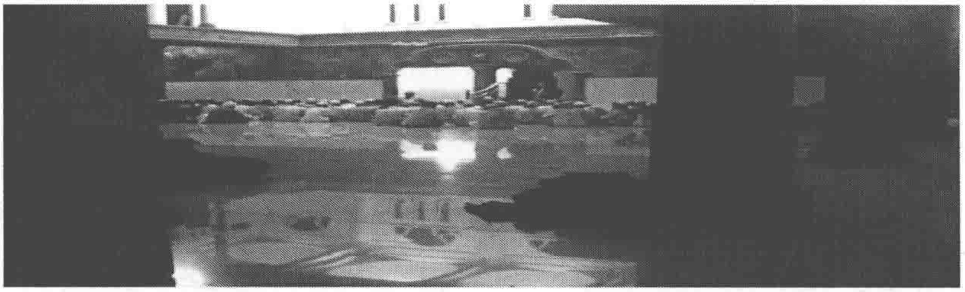


Photo 15. The *bayān* after morning prayer in Cot Goh, Banda Aceh (author, 2007).

After the *'ishā'* prayer, a *karkūn* approached to give me an envelope. I was surprised and refused this gift by saying, "I do not need this money, please use this for the *meunasah*". This surprised me as I did not know that the *bayānist* were paid. I believed that most *karkūn* would take the position that this payment is a reward for their worship from Allah and not from humans.

This experience of giving a "religious sermon" led me to reflect how the tradition of *bayān* among *karkūn* might change when the ritual occurs outside the Jama'ah Tablīgh community. One *karkūn* told me that JT must change its strategy if it wants the broader community to feel "our presence in their hearts". He had developed a strategy of inviting Muslims to join him in travelling to Cot Goh in order to listen to a "real *bayān*". This strategy proved quite successful as, according to the *karkūn* who was a member of parliament, many men in this village had become *karkūn* as a result of attending a *bayān* in Cot Goh. For this reason, after the sermon the *karkūn* of this *meunasah* he waited for anyone who wanted to chat more about Jamā'ah Tablīgh. He also told me that he wanted to travel to Mecca to do *umrah* (a small *hajj*), instead of going to *khurūj* in IPB. As he said at our first meeting, he had just performed a three-day *khurūj* in a village near Banda Aceh. This shows that in his opinion, to be a *bayān*ist and a *karkūn* one must know how to talk to both Tablighists and non-

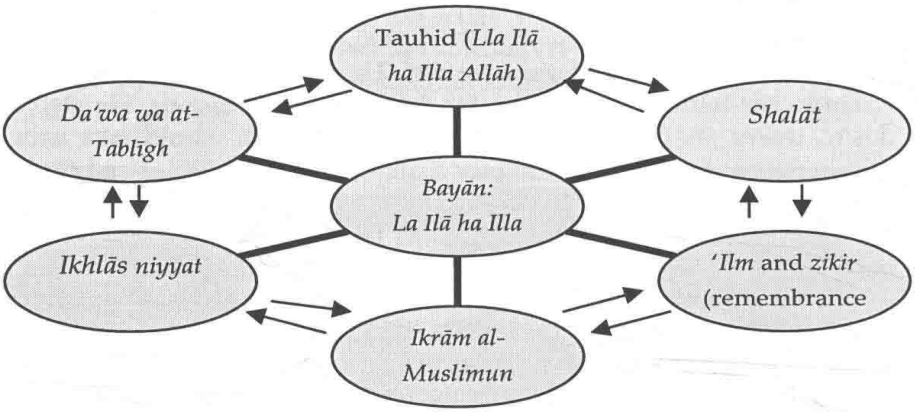
Tablighists. In particular, one needs to change one's way of talking in order to convince the audience, especially when we understand the differences between "our friends in the same mission" (fellow Tablighists) and "those who are not our friends in the same mission" (non-Tablighists).

During the *ijtimā'* in Pekan Baru, there was a marathon of *bayān* at every prayer time. Before the *bayān* started, a *karkūn* would call for all participants to sit closer to the main stage. He said that the closer we sat to our friends, the harder it would be for devils to sit among us. He also told us not to worry about our belongings, because Allah would take care of these things. As discussed in Chapter 5 above, the place was used for both sleeping and praying. Thus, *karkūn* wanted to be as close as possible to the main stage, where the *mawlana* who was to give the *bayān* sat on a sofa together with his translator. To make this group comfortable, the main stage was large enough for 10-12 people. Thus, all *mawlana* would take their seats behind the *bayānist*. When the *mawlana* began his talk, the audience was strongly recommended to keep silent. However, during the *bayān*, I walked around the arena to see whether all *karkūn* were listening. In fact, many of them were outside the forum and some were in the market. I assumed that not every *karkūn* was interested in listening to every *bayān*, or that they might be familiar with the contents of that particular *bayān*.

## *Bayān* and the Six Points of Jamā'ah Tablīgh

At the beginning of my study, I did not understand why *bayān* was so important for *karkūn*. Why did they spend their time once a week attending the night *markāż* (*malam markāż*)? At the time, no one could explain to me why the *bayān* were so important. All I was told was that the *bayānist* can talk on any subject of his choice, but always in the context of the Six Points. However, no-one would explain what these were or why they had to be delivered in a highly organised way. But, after attending several *bayān* I came to realise that *bayān* is a "recipe" for indoctrination within Jamā'ah Tablīgh and the most important vehicle for instructing *karkūn* on the six central tenets of Jamā'ah Tablīgh, the so-called Six Points. For this reason, the most important *bayān* is that which follows morning prayers or *shubuh*, as this *bayān* is designed in particular to instruct *karkūn* on the six most important aspects of Jama'ah Tabligh. According to Tablighists, the Six Points are the *enam sifat sahabat* (six characters of the companions). Every *karkūn* must follow these characters if they want to be a good Muslim. These Six Points are depicted in Figure 5.1. as: *Tauhid* (*Lā ilāha illā Allāh* and understanding "the Oneness of

God"); *shalāt* (prayer); *'ilm* (knowledge) and *zikir* (remembering Allah); *ikrām al-Muslim* (respect for Muslims); *ikhlās niyyat* (sincerity of purpose), and *tablīgh* and *da'wa* (Islamic missionary).




In the rest of this section I draw on several *bayān* that I observed in Banda Aceh in order to expand on the meaning and importance of the Six Points. I start with a *bayān* I attended after *shubuh* prayer in a mosque in Cot Goh, Banda Aceh. I was sitting in a corner of the mosque, so sleepy that I could hardly keep my eyes open. In contrast, many *karkūn* were sitting and listening attentively to the message of the *bayān*. Some of them were also sleepy, but were concentrating because immediately before the *bayān* started, a *karkūn* asked the audience to focus on the *bayān* with full concentration. He said that full concentration is important to remembering *lā ilā ha illā Allah*, which will build "walls" to keep the devil from interfering with the aims of the *bayān*. If we concentrate fully, Allah will send his angel to protect the aims of the forum. He completed this introduction by saying that this forum was only for Allah. The *bayānist* on this occasion came from Magelang in East Java. He was a famous ulama and a member of Nahdatul 'Ulamā, before he became a *karkūn*. He had come to attend the *jorh* in Aceh and had paid for the trip himself. During the trip, he travelled with the amir in order to meet *karkūn* and give *bayān* in other parts of the province. Many of the students from his *pesantren* in Magelang were religious teachers in Cot Goh. He was famous among Indonesian *karkūn* for this *bayān*. I was told by many *karkūn* that his *bayān* always had a clear message and was never boring.

## *Tauhid (la Ilā ha illā Allāh)*

On this morning in Cot Goh, the *kyai* started his *bayān* by examining the situation of a baby in the mother's womb. He asked who had made this baby, who gave life to him in his mother's womb and makes sure that he is well? Then he spoke of the creator of this world, including the creator of the baby inside his mother's womb. He pointed out that sexual intercourse between a man and a woman after marriage is the cause of a baby, but asked who is it that makes the life for the baby inside the mother's womb? I wondered what this had to do with the activities of Jamā'ah Tablīgh. He led his audience to think seriously about this. Some *karkūn* started to cry, tears appeared in their eyes. I tried to cry but only thought why people are doing this? What is the point of crying about a baby in its mother's womb? I felt that I was the only *karkūn* who was not crying. A *karkūn* behind me looked at me as though asking why I was not crying.

The *bayānist* resumed by saying that if you were killed in your mother's womb, could you stop it? If you died in your mother's body, could you say that you could feel the beauty of the world? You could not even see the face of your mother if you died before you were born. In response, the *karkūn* seemed to lose their emotional control and some started repeating: "*lā ilā ha illā Lāh*" or "*Allāh Akbar*". I thought they had gone into ecstasy. I was the only one not reciting these words, thinking that the process of a baby in its mother's womb is a natural one, which Muslims call *sunnat Allāh* (God willing). It did not seem to be an issue worth discussing in such a forum. For me, Allah has His own works, and humans also have theirs.

Pretending that I was very sad and emotional, I tried to cry, but I could not do it. The *bayānist* then talked about the process of transition of a baby from his or her mother's womb. At this point he paused, asking "do you know who makes this entire process?" The audience responded by saying: Allah! Allah! Allah! The *karkūn* wanted to express this word freely. "If Allah made this process, why do you forget your Creator? If you know Allah is the supreme power, why do you not do his Command?" After he said this, the *karkūn* were quiet and started looking at themselves. No-one looked at his friends. I was sitting trying to understand that this *bayān* was an emotional process; that is, an emotional process designed to connect men on the earth to Allah through listening to *bayān*.

This example demonstrates how the process of remembering *lā ilā ha illā Lāh* is achieved through *bayān*. This is the first of the Six Points of Jamā'ah Tablīgh and can be called the process of remembering the Oneness of God. In Islamic studies, this is called *tauhīd*, an Arabic word meaning literally "making one" or "unifying". According to Sonn, this

term is "considered by many twentieth century Islamic activists to be the axial or defining doctrine of Islam" (Sonn, 1995: 190). Thus, many Muslim activists see *tauhīd* as part of their struggle in doing *jihād* for the Islamic faith. For Jamā'ah Tablīgh, *tauhīd* is important as it leads Muslims to go beyond the word *tauhīd* in order to explain and spread the *lā ilā ha illā Lāh* as the core of it (see Bustamam-Ahmad, 2007).

In the next section of his talk, the *bayānist* turned to the question of what are the most important things for humans after their worship of God (Allah). He said that what we receive in this life depends on what we do in our lives. In living our lives, he recommended that humans should maintain only good conduct. He recommended that we do not debate any problems we had with this *bayān*. This may have been because when he spoke of "good conduct", he was addressing directly one of the "Six Points". "Good conduct", for him, means doing whatever Allah commands. He occasionally made jokes during his *bayān*, not to provoke laughing but to encourage the audience to think seriously.

> We need to think that doing good conduct is never questioned by us or made into a seminar topic. This is like the anecdote: if the intellectual says "*sami'nā wa fakkarnā*" (we listen and we will make a seminar about it), the ordinary Muslim may say "*sami'nā wa nasīnā*" (we listen and we forget it), the non-believer says, when we recommend "good conduct", "*sami'nā wa 'asainā*" (we listen and we never obey it). It is very hard for "real Muslims" to do good things in this world, because they must say "*sami'nā wa atha'nā*" (we listen and we certainly obey it) (field notes, July 2007).

The participants responded by repeating: "Allah! Allah! Allah!" And "*mā sha Allāh!*" The words *sami'nā wa atha'nā* are found in the Qur'an and mean that Muslims follow only three sets of commands in this world: those of Allah, the Prophet and the Just Rulers (*ulil amri*) (see discussion of *ulil amri* in Chapter 3 above). On this theme, the *bayānist* said that the meaning of good was made manifest in lives and behaviour of the companions of the Prophet. As Muslims, we must learn from the lives of the *sahabat* who spread Islam around the world.

Other *bayānist* that I observed also sought to link their introductions to the Oneness of God and faith in this *lā ilā ha illā Lāh*. The *bayānist* here was an Acehnese *karkūn*, a senior *karkān* of Cot Goh. He gave *bayān* on 26 November 2006 and many times during my fieldwork, especially if there was no *karkūn* from outside Cot Goh in *malam markāż*. This is one of his *bayān* in one *malam markāż*:

After this *bayān*, there will be *takaza-takaza* (request or command) for doing *da'wa* to spread the religion. Are we ready to obey this command? *Insha Allāh*! Tonight, Allah has moved our hearts to come to this *majlis* (forum). We sit for a while in order to understand how religion can exist in our souls and hearts and also amongst our families and other people in the world. We must implement religious teaching in ourselves, our families and in this world. First, we need to think about *imān* (faith). If *imān* is correct, *inshā Allāh*, then the other practices will also lead us to our faith in Allah. If our *imān* is not strong enough, then we must learn more about how to gain *imān* in our hearts and souls. This is the meaning of the word of *lā ilā ha illā Allāh.*

If today, children and elders think seriously about faith in Allah, so belief will be guided into our lives. But, if the ummah does not think seriously about *imān* in Allah, so faith will not be seen and implemented in daily life. Therefore, the ummah must learn about the faith in Allah from childhood. In this context, the "situation of *imān"* will fight with the "situation of materialism" in this life.

Our *bayān* is to enhance our *imān* in Allah. The most important thing is correct *yaqīn* (belief) in Allah. This belief must be in our lives from birth to the day we die. Allah never abandons His Creation, including human beings. Because Allah loved the Prophet, so He also loves the society of the Prophet. The companions of the Prophet were given a *ma'shūm* (a guarantee to enter His Paradise), but they still work very hard to gain *imān* in Allah, even though it is already guaranteed that they will enter Paradise. We do not have a *ma'shūm*, but we do not believe in Allah. Allah has promised that for whoever does good conduct, men and women, He will reward that practice ten times.

But, we do not believe in promises from Allah. If we really believe it, than we *yaqīn* in whatever Allah has promised. If we fail even a little in *'amal* (good conduct), we will cry. We will feel guilty and hesitate. We will be unable to eat and drink. This shows that we do not believe in the completeness of Allah's promise.

Today, I want you to understand how to worship Allah. Believe in the promise of Allah. All of these things must be in our souls. Thus we will follow and implement all of the commands of Allah. Allah has scarified the Prophet to stop the feeling of narcissism among tribes in His Era, for unifying and building the one ummah. In fact, the *sahabat* would cry if they knew our situation in this era where ummah do not have a strong belief in their souls. Thus, our faith must be reconstructed. Our listening should be in the situation of *yaqīn* to Allah. Allah has sent prophets to reconstruct the belief (*yaqīn*) in Allah. The people who were guaranteed by Allah that they would enter Paradise still thought about Allah. At the same time they were sacrificed by Allah to promote *imān* to Allah. This is the aim of gaining *yaqīn* in Allah, even when they were in a condition of *ma'shūm* (transcript of *bayān* recorded 3 November 2006. My translation).

When the *bayānist* mentioned the *sahabat*, I was reminded of the Six Points of Jamā'ah Tablīgh', said to be adopted from the lives of the *sahabat rasūl*. Tablighists see the *sahabat* as an example of the Prophet. Therefore, Muslims follow the *sahabat*, meaning that they are following the Prophet and following the Prophet means obeying Allah as the supreme power. This can be achieved by engaging in "good conduct" in the activity of prayer. *Karkūn* asked how we can live on this earth without thanking the owner of the planet. There are many Gods on the planet. Every community has its own God and own perception of God. *Bayānist* say that the Muslim God is also the God of non-Muslims. To understand God, they say, we must seek him in daily life, which is done by performing *shalāt*. *Shalāt* is a way of thanking and remembering Allah.

## *Shalāt*

The importance of *shalāt* in terms of the Six Points is similar to its central position as one of the Five Pillars of Islam (*arkān al-Islam*),[2] after the recital of *kalīmah shahadāt*. Masud maintains that "the Jam[ā]'a[h] ...stresses that the daily life of five prayers should be performed in congregation in a mosque" (Masud, 2000: 21). Thus, *karkūn* always ask people to come to the mosque to pray together, because they believe that the most appropriate place for *shalāt* is a mosque. The *bayānist* continued his message by saying that thanking and remembering Allah are good if they are done in a group (*jamā'ah*), in a mosque. The house is a place of rest, outside the house is for seeking money and for other worldly activities. But the mosque is the best place for Muslims to pray.

Jamā'ah Tablīgh members are obliged to spend time in a mosque, which is called *i'tikāf*. As we have seen, most key JT activities involve *karkūn* in mosques. This leads me to think about the important of *shalāt* and the position of the mosque.[3] Given that *shalāt* is remembered as one of

---

[2] Five pillars of Islam: central creed of Islam (*kalīmah shahādat*), prayer (*shalāt*), fasting (*shawm*), alms (*zakāt*), pilgrimage (*hajj*). In general, Islamic teaching emphasizes the importance of *shalāt*. Thus, every Muslim is expected to perform *shalat* until their death, as well as perform *shalat* for other Muslims upon their death, known as *shalāt mayyīt*. See Muhiyud-Din (2001).

[3] See also explanations on the contribution of *shalāt* to Muslim society. Bowen (1989:600-619), for example, has analyzed the influence of *shalāt* for Muslims in an Acehnese community in the Gayo Highland in Central Aceh. Saba Mahmood (2001: 827-853) argued for the influence of *shalāt* in her fieldwork among a women's group in Egypt. A good explanation of the importance on *shalāt* can be found in such Islamic recources, as Abu Rabi' (1995) and some Jawi books such as

the Six Points in each *bayān*, it is highly likely that for *karkūn* there is a strong connection between the mosque and *shalāt*. For some *karkūn* there is even a strong connection among the mosque, *shalāt* and the implementation of Islamic law and the Islamic state. One *karkūn* in Sri Perdana Baru told me that when Muslims perform *shalāt* in a mosque, there is no debate about what constitutes an Islamic state. What he was trying to convey is the extent to which the mosque and *shalāt* are the symbolic pillars of an Islamic state, a point discussed in the previous chapter. However, we must also take into account how the "symbols" of mosque and *shalāt* are incorporated into the everyday mosque-based activities of Jamā'ah Tablīgh.

As we have seen, Jamā'ah Tablīgh utilises the mosque as a centre of activities. This model was adopted from the tradition of the Prophet when he started doing *da'wa* with his companions. Many subsequent Islamic movements have adopted this function of the mosque. Rabi' has argued that "in the view of modern Muslim revivalists, the mosque offers a multiplicity of functions. First, it is a place of worship; it links the people of this earth with the affairs of the heavens" (Rabi', 1995: 472). This connection with the heavens is established through prayer in the mosque. Thus, the Javanese *bayānist* said that the more a Muslim comes to the mosque, the more he understands his fellow Muslims and paradise. In his words, "we do not know the people in our neighbourhood if they do not come to the mosque".

*Shalāt* is also the primary way of performing good conduct. The rules for performing *shalāt* are taken from a variety of Islamic jurisprudence texts, rooted in the Holy Book and the Traditions of the Prophet (*sunnah*

---

'Abdus Samad Palimbani's *Sīyar al-Salikīn*. (n.d). This book is widely read in Islamic boarding schools in Southeast Asia and offers an expanded commentary on Al-Gazzalī's *Ihyā 'Ulūm al-Dīn*. Al-Gazzalī's book explains the steps of doing *shalat* and how it impacts on the self (soul, heart, and mind) and society. However, because this book also discusses Sufism-related issues found in *Jamā'ah Tablīgh* and Islamic traditions in Southeast Asia, the book has been regarded as a book on sufist methods. However, I found that this book is most concerned with Islamic legal thought deriving from two traditions: the rationalist (Imam Abu Hanifah) and textualist (Imām Mālik as in *Al-Muwatta'* (2005) The traditions were synthesized by Imām al-Syafi'ī in his book *Al-Umm*, and later developed by Al-Gazalī, who synthesized Islamic legal thought with Sufism and philosophy in his *Ihyā'* (see Crow 2008). For a brief historical overview of this discourse see generally Hallaq (2001); Schacht (1996); Minhaji (1997). For the role of Al-Gazzali, see for example Amin Abdullah (1996, 1998). This discourse has been summarized by Graham (1993). I have contributed to some extent on this discussion in Bustamam-Ahmad (2007: 135-180; 1999: 143-175, 2002) with Akh. Minhaji (2003:40-53).

and *hadiths*) (see for example, Bowen, 1989: 600-19). The act of prayer according to Abu-Rabi' includes "well defined movement [and] involves the following required steps: ablution (*wudhū'* or *ṭahārah*), intention (*nīyat*), bending the back (*rukū'*), and prostration (*sujūd*)" (Rabi', 1995: 470). However, in all the *bayān* I attended, I did not hear any *bayānist* describe the process of performing *shalāt*. Instead they spoke only of the importance of this ritual. Nor were we told on the necessity to face *Ka'ba*, a holy place in Mecca, when praying. I suspect that most *bayānist*, including during the *ijtimā'* in Pekan Baru, do not discuss such matters because they assume that the *karkūn* already know about them. Instead, we were repeatedly reminded through *bayān* of the importance of prayer.

### *'Ilm (knowledge) and Żikir (remembrance of Allah)*

After the *bayānist* talked about *shalāt*, he began discussing the third of the Six Points, that is *'ilm* (knowledge) and *żikīr* (remembrance of Allah). He began with a story of a stupid Muslim, one who pursues good conduct without any knowledge. He was stressing our need, as Muslims, to behave morally while seeking knowledge. Tablighists pursue knowledge through many sources by collaborating and engaging in *'ilm* (science) and *'amal* (practice). However, the practice of seeking knowledge through debate or "question and answer" sessions is not tolerated during *bayān* itself. When I was conducting *khurūj* with Tablighist in Sungai Manis in Kuala Lumpur, there was a new *karkūn* who asked questions during *bayān*. He was stopped by other *karkūn* who said: "Just listen to him [the *bayānist*]!" This forum was like a one-sided lecture without any interaction. A *karkūn* told me that we may debate or study with each other during *mużākarah* (discussion) sessions in the morning or before bed time, but not during a *bayān*.

The conception of *'ilm* among Tablighist is interesting. Masud writes that Jama'ah Tabligh define knowledge "as learning the virtues (*fadhā'il*), and rewards in the Hereafter, all of obligatory acts and other things a person does" (Masud, 2000: 22). This definition is hard to understand in modern scientific terms but it gives us good insight into how Tablighists understand the three dimensions of *'ilm*. This conception of *'ilm* became evident in my interview with a senior *karkūn* in Cot Goh when I first came to Banda Aceh to do fieldwork.

His name was Safar and he was sixty-five years old. He told me that the foundation of *'ilm* is to understand Allah. To understand Him, we must follow the *dīn* (religion) as it is written in the Qur'an. For Tablighists, there are two sciences: *'ilm al-masā'il* for understanding the rules for the

worship of Allah and *'ilm al-fadhā'il* for learning the virtues of worship. Safar told me that all worship must have its reward. For example, staff employees get a salary and students receive a certificate. Thus, he said that we must understand the reward of our attitude in the world. Worship of Allah will only be rewarded by Him that is mentioned as a science of *fadhā'il amal*.

To understand the *'ilm masā'il*, he said, we must seek a teacher or *ustāż*. We must seek *'ilm* everywhere and from every person. However, to learn *'ilm fadhā'il*, we must read the book of *Fadhā'il Amal*. This has been translated into more than twenty languages and become compulsory reading for all *karkūn* (Kandahlawi, 2001). Most *karkūn* activities can be seen as a process of *fadhā'il amal* in the sense that all worship will be rewarded by Allah. A *karkūn* explained to me that our worship has its own reward from Allah because everything we do is due to Him. Safar explained the three methods of achieving the *fadhā'il amal* (virtues of worship). The first is *sūrah* which means civilised or performance. According to him, *karkūn* have adopted the example of the Prophet's life in their way of worship and other daily activities such as sleeping, eating, talking and meeting with other people. Thus, *karkūn* wear gameez because the Prophet used to wear it. *Karkūn* eat together from a big plate because according to their perception, the Prophet ate this way. In Safar's words: "Arab people took the Prophet as their example in daily life, thus the Jamā'ah Tablīgh follow this tradition". They have taken the traditions of the Arab peoples as their model because they are assumed to be "civilised". A *karkūn* in Cot Goh told me his motto in life: "the world can be changed, but the world of the Prophet can not be changed".

The second method of gaining *'ilm* is *sīrah*, meaning to follow the practice of the Prophet in daily life. This is similar to the first, but with more emphasis on how to follow the daily life of the Prophet. To do this, Muslims might say that they are doing *sunnah* or focusing on the Tradition of the Prophet. This knowledge can be gained if Muslims make the Prophet central to their lives. For *karkūn* to follow the Prophet, they need to learn about the next generation after Him, that is, the *sahabat*. Thus, after noon and late night prayer, *karkūn* will read about the lives of the *sahabat*. The Javanese *bayānist* told the audience that a beautiful life in this world is the life of the Prophet and the life of the generation that followed his companions. In relation to this, he told us about the difficulties faced by the *sahabat* in spreading the word of *lā ilā ha illā Allāh*. In sum, he said we must take up the position of following the Prophet by seeking his example in the lives of the *sahabat*. I believe that this is the reason why *karkūn* move from place to place to do *da'wa*,

leaving their families behind and donating their time, money and selves to travel to other parts of the world. Just as the Prophet and the *sahabat* constantly moved from one region to another (referred to as the process of *hijrah*), so through the lessons of *sīrah karkūn* also learn about the importance of *da'wa* through *khurūj* as an important component of following the model set by the Prophet and the *sahabat*.

The third method is *saghīrah* (hesitation and sadness). Safar informed me that this method involves thinking seriously not about converting non-Muslims to Islam, but rather to think that this is because they (non-Muslims) have not received *da'wa*. This way of thinking comes from the way of the Prophet in preaching Islam in his era. It is reported that if anyone who hurt Him, the Prophet would pray to Allah to save this community, because they have not yet received the *da'wa*. He blamed himself instead of the non-believers, because He believed He had failed to convince them of the good way of life. Safar told me that the aim of *da'wa* is to correct the morality of Muslims and non-Muslims as the Prophet did in his era. Islam, he said, comes from the word *salām* (peace). Thus, *karkūn* must always be concerned with and think seriously about the decreasing morality of Muslims in their area.

*Żikir* is the second element which is together with *'ilm* makes up the third of the Six Points. Here the *bayānist* said that we should always remember our boss if he rewards us with a good salary or a promotion. We respect him and never say "no" to him. We even treat some people as our idols. We are crazy at times because of our emotional connection to our "idols". We hang their pictures to remind us of them in our daily lives. We collect their photos or newspaper clippings to put in our albums and show them to our friends. We also send text messages to support our "idols" in TV competitions, even though they are not members of our family. The problem is that while we remember our human idols, we forget our creator, the one who made our "idol" in the first place. It seems that we cannot see Him. At this point, most of the audience began to cry, I assumed partly because some of them did have "idols" in their daily lives. The *bayānist* continued by saying that we believe and respect only what we can see, and that we do not care about Him who always cares for us, because we do not see Him face-to-face.

His voice was very slow and powerful. The forum was silent and no-one talked when the *bayānist* told them about *żikir*. However, he did not define *żikir*, rather he wanted to "fight" against the emotions of the audience. He said that we lived in our mother's wombs, but we did not see her or our creator. After we are out of the womb, we always respect her as our mother. He then talked about moving life from one space to another.

There is a power that protects us, he said, but, this power does not belong to us. After your death, you still cannot see Him, because he only promises to see you on the day Hereafter (*qiyāmah*). This reminded me of another *bayān* during the *ijtimā'* in Pekanbaru when the *bayānist* asked about our idols and said that we should never forget that the creator of idols is Allah. I would say that *bayān* is used to remind *karkūn*, but not to teach them about, the *żikir*. Masud writes:

> According to the Tablīgh program, the best form of *żikir* is the study of the Qur'an itself. One must, however, learn the invocations or prayers which the Prophet Muhammad said on different occasions, such as while eating food, entering a town, going to bed, riding a vehicle (Masud, 2000: 27).

## *Ikrām al-Muslim (respect for Muslims)*

The next of the Six Points concerns *ikrām-i-Muslim* (respect for Muslims). While this particular *bayānist* did not explicitly discuss this tenet, it came out through one of his stories (see below). In addition, *ikrām-i-Muslim* is already well understood by *karkūn* and, as I have observed, was expressed on numerous occasions, such as during meetings, *ijtimā'*, the activities in the *markāż* and the process of *jorh*. In this way, *karkūn* strongly tie their relationships to one another to the rules of good conduct or behaviour, called *adāb*. This concept is most like the concept of the brotherhood of Muslims (*ikhwān al-muslimīn*). As the *bayānist* explained:

> There was a young man who was looking for a great teacher to know Allah. He came to one of the great teachers (*syaikh*) to learn the meaning of life in the world. The teacher did not give any lessons in a classroom, instead he asked the young man to accompany him out to sea in his boat. While they were in the boat, the great teacher asked him to jump into water. Because the young man wanted to know Allah, without question he jumped into the sea. Because he could not swim, he expected the great teacher to help him. He asked for help many times. However, the great teacher did not help him, instead just read his own book. Because the great teacher did not offer any help, the young man almost died in the water. When he was in between life and death, he said: "Oh Allah help me! Oh Allah help me! Oh Allah help me!" whereupon the teacher took him from the water, saving his life. Then he said to the young man: "You know your God when you are almost dying (*sakarātul maut*). If you can understand God, you can understand yourself, and if you can understand yourself, then you can understand other people. Thus, you must start to think about God by empathising with other people". Then, the great teacher said that

the lesson was finished and asked the young man to find the meaning of the message.

Listening to this story, most of audience seemed to understand that there are three dimensions in respecting people: respect for Allah, respect for oneself and respect for other people. When a *karkūn* respects another Muslim, he is respecting himself and Allah as his Creator in the world. It can be understood that someone who has respect for Allah must also have respect for himself and fellow Muslims. Thus, Shahab writes, "*ikrām muslim* is to fulfil the right of each Muslim, without hoping that our right would be fulfilled. This can be achieved through good morality and good conduct towards humans and other species in the world. One of the characteristics of respect for Muslims is patience" (Shahab, nd: 129).

Many times during my fieldwork I heard the word *ikrām*. When I met the amir of Aceh, he invited me to come to his house to have lunch. This invitation was part of his respect for Muslims and showed that he wanted to associate with me as part of a common brotherhood in our shared faith (*imān*). The way younger *karkūn* take meals to their elders in the *markāż* in Sri Petaling is also a mark of their respect for Muslims, in the sense that younger Muslims must respect older ones. The seating arrangement for new *karkūn* on our trip from Banda Aceh to Pekan Baru was similarly an indication of *ikrām*. The method of visiting the senior ulama in a region to seek his "permission" as a guardian of society before undertaking further activities can also be seen as a mark of *ikrām* for Muslims who have deep religious knowledge. In fact, all the good things that I experienced while in the field could in some sense be related to the idea of *ikrām muslim* amongst Tablighists.

However, *ikrām muslim* is also a way of respecting oneself and Allah. When *karkūn* admire other people, they always say that "our meeting is due to Allah, and He will reward our meeting". One can conclude from this statement that to meet other Muslims is also to engage in a process of mutual understanding. This understanding can best be achieved if we understand this meeting as belonging to Allah. Finally, the spirit of the willingness of Allah is part of Tablighists' self-understanding. Safar said to me that when humans seek help from other humans, this is against the principle of believing in Allah. What he meant was that first and foremost, Muslims must seek help from Him. Thus, during the *bayān*, *karkūn* are strongly recommended not to ask help from people, but only from Allah.

## *Ikhlās niyyat (sincerity of purpose)*

The next of the Six Points is *ikhlās nīyat* (sincerity of purpose) or *tashīh nīyat* (emendation of intention). This pillar is mentioned in every *bayān*, especially in conjunction with the command to go on *khurūj*. An Acehnese *bayānist* told the audience that everything that we do in the world must begin with *ikhlās nīyat* because our attitude is standardised and calculated by how we understand *lā ilā ha illā Lāh* in our minds and souls. Masud writes:

> This principle is basic to the formation of Tablighi attitudes and it sanctifies most of the actions necessary for the Tabligh work, since they are justified on the basis of their good intentions. Similarly, this works as a principle of *self-criticism* because every Tablighi must be conscious of his and her intentions in all acts (Masud, 2000: 24, emphasis added).

At many *bayān* forums that I attended, there was an announcement before the sermon started, when one of the *jamā'ah tasykīl* would say:

> We are in this forum because of Allah. Please do not change your intention in coming to this forum. Allah will reward us because of our presence in this meeting. We have our intention to come from our house to the mosque only to listen to the message which will be delivered shortly. Please always remind yourself of your intention, because if we cannot maintain it, the devil will come with us as well.

I have listened to this announcement many times without thinking about what would happen if it were not made repeatedly. During *bayān*, it is recommended that *karkūn* sit very close to each other when listening to the sermon. The *bayānist* will not repeat this announcement during his presentation. Rather, he explains the reward of being in this forum as that of having good intention. Human intention is also part of the necessary preparation for worshipping Allah. *Karkūn* believe that human intention is not something that can be understood by devils or angels. It is part of the relationship between humans and Allah. Therefore, emendation of intention is a secret shared only by the Creator (*khāliq*) and His Creation (*makhlūk*). *Ikhlās* is the soul or spirit of all worship. Worship without sincerity can be seen as the presentation of a dead body to Allah (Shahab, nd: 133). In sum, *ikhlās nīyat* is a part of controlling temptation among *karkūn*. If they have problems with their worship, one *karkūn* will say: "please do not change your intention". This means that the good intention becomes an "obstacle" for every person who attends the Jamā'ah Tablīgh program.

During *ijtimā'*, *karkūn* connected *ikhlās nīyat* with the word *mujāhadah* (struggle). In *mushāwarah*, if one's ideas are nor approved by other participants or the amir, *karkūn* are told to remember the sincerity of intention and to control any hurt feelings through remembering Allah by saying *alhamdulillāh* or *astaghfirullāh*. In doing *khidmat* at the *markāż* they refer to their *nīyat* in order to perform successful *da'wa*. Thus, the issue of *nīyat* is always coupled with the idea of controlling their minds and actions. It is not misleading to say that one controls one's soul or spirit through having a strong sincerity of purpose, and then manages the mind by some other means. The outcome is that *karkūn* will do whatever they are asked to do as individuals or as part of this community. In other words, if humans can control their hearts and minds, then they can control the self in their body.

In fact, when a person becomes a member of Jamā'ah Tablīgh there is no need for him to say "I am a *karkūn*" or "I need to be registered", because he has already "registered" his soul and his mind by listening to *bayān* and involving himself in other Jamā'ah Tablīgh programs (such as *khidmat*, *mushāwarah*, *khurūj*, *amīr* and *shūra*). I discuss this further in Chapter 8 when we look at selected life histories of JT members. What we find in this tenet is a secret strategy to control members without telling them. *Bayān* is a way of controlling people's souls and minds by encouraging them not to think or do anything other than remember the *lā ilā ha illā Allah*. It could be argued that sincerity of *nīyat* is part of what it takes to make a good Sufist.

To sum up, I quote from Troll's comments on the idea of *ikhlās* from Mawlana Ilyas:

> *Ikhlās-i niyyat* is to make the believer prefer the Hereafter and the Divine Approbation to the luxuries of this passing world. *Ikhlās* (sincerity) ... can rightly be called the life and soul of the entire moral edifice of Islam ... If the action lacks sincerity, however dignified or pious it may be, it will not fetch any reward from Allah (Troll, 1994: 122).

### *Da'wa and tablīgh*

The last of the Six Points always discussed by *bayānists* is *da'wa* and *tablīgh*. Some also call this *tafrīgh waqt* (sparing time). *Bayānists* do not define this term, saying only that if we have received something from Allah it is our obligation to spread the *lā ilā ha illā Lāh* around the world. Here we are told to take the experience of *sahabat* as the model for doing *da'wa*. They donated their time, money and selves to go beyond the Arabian Peninsula to ask people to think and act according to *lā ilā ha illā*

*Lāh*. You, the *bayānist* said, have been chosen by Allah to be "His slave" in this world. So, it is your honour to work under His Guidance (*hidāyah*) to promote *lā ilā ha illā Lāh* in peoples' hearts and minds. I stand here, he added, to remind you of the importance of this mission.

This is an invitation for every *karkūn* to do *khurūj*. Whenever the importance of this was discussed, the *jamā'ah tasykīl* would stand up behind the audience. I imagined that it was like the situation in a market place, with the *bayānist* selling "the reward" from Allah, and the *karkūn* paying in time, money and self-sacrifice in *khurūj*. Thus, the Acehnese *bayānist* started by saying: "we need cash *jama'ah* to be sent out to IPB, Australia, Brazil and Israel. Our friends (Muslim and non-Muslim) are waiting for our arrival. This trip is for Allah, not for us! Allah gave everything to us in the world, He just needs some of our time, money and selves to carry out His command. The Prophet and His companions sacrificed their lives to spread the word of '*lā ilā ha illā Lāh*'. We know that they were assured by Allah that they would enter His paradise. Thus, we must follow the people who received this guarantee from the Creator of the world". This message stirred the spirits and many *karkūn* stood up and raised their hands, indicating their intention to go on *khurūj*. Some could not control their emotions, saying that they would devote the rest of their lives to Islam by doing *khurūj*. I saw this many times in Kuala Lumpur and Pekan Baru, especially when the *bayānist* was a *mawlana* from Nizamuddin, experienced in inspiring and giving spirit to the audience. On this occasion, many *karkūn* responded to the market-like atmosphere and registered their names, some even departing the next morning on a three-day *khurūj*. He then closed by asking for guidance from Allah; many *karkūn* went outside to take *wudhu*' (ablution) and wait for prayer time. On other occasions when the *bayān* was delivered after the *shubuh* prayer, the congregation would simply disperse to their homes.

As this suggests, the strength of the Jamā'ah Tablīgh organisation lies in its ability to motivate its members to undertake *khurūj*. There is here a collaboration between the *bayānist* and the *jamā'ah tasykīl* who organises the *bayān*. As I have argued, this forum is a place where the *bayānists* sell the Six Points to the audience. Full concentration (*tawajjuh*) during this transaction is needed. The Six Points, it can be argued are the ideological steps towards a *karkūn*'s full commitment. A *karkūn* who listens to *bayān* every week in *mohalla*, *halaqah*, *markāż*, *jorh*, and *ijtimā'* is one who can control his mind and soul and thereby become a "slave of Allah" (*'ibād ar-rahmān*). In addition, he can spend between three days and four months travelling, performing missionary work like the Prophet and His companions earlier.

As shown in Table 5.1, this construction of the Six Points of the Jamā'ah Tablīgh is very close to an implementation of the Five Pillars of Islam and the six articles of *imān* (faith). The six articles of faith are belief in Allah, the Prophet, the Qur'an, angels (*malāikat*), the Hereafter (*qiyāmah*), and *Qadhā* and *Qadar* (Allah's decree, either good or bad).[4] To implement *rukun iman* (the six articles of faith), every Muslim should perform the Five Pillars (*rukun Islam*) in his or her daily life. I would argue that the Six Points of Jamā'ah Tablīgh represent a synthesis of these Five Pillars and six articles; in particular, that the Six Points combine the pillars and articles of Islamic faith with the characteristics of prophets according to Islamic belief – *shiddiq* (the truth), commitment to *tablīgh* (missionary activity), *amanah* (trustworthiness) and *fathanah* (intelligence). Each of these characteristics is linked to the last of the Six Points in particular, that is, the obligation to perform *da'wa* and *tablīgh*. The way of delivering and listening to *bayān* reminds *karkūn* that they, as human beings, are the creation of Allah. Recounting the history of the Prophet and his companions offers a template for *karkūn* of how to behave in their community and as the chosen people (*khaiyr al-ummah*) of the world.

**Table 2**

| | **Six Points of JT** | **Six Pillars of Muslim Faith** | **Five Pillars of Islam** |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | *Lā ilāha illā allāh* | Belief in Allah | *Syahādat* |
| 2. | *Shalāt* | Belief in *Malāikat* (angels) | *Shalāt* |
| 3. | *Ilm* and *zikir* | Belief in the Holy books (the Qur'an, al-Injīl, Torah and Zabur) | *Shawm* (fasting) |
| 4. | *Ikrām al-Muslim* (Respect for Muslims) | Belief in the Prophet | *Żakat* (alms) |
| 5. | *Ikhlās niyyat* | Belief in *Qiyamat* (the Day of Judgment) | *Hajj* |
| 6. | *Tablīgh* | Belief in *Qadha* and *qadar* | |

[4] On this, see for example, Saleh (2001).

## Conclusion

The description of *bayān* above can be analysed from three dimensions in relation to its effects on *karkūn* and their understanding of Islam. The first relates to the world of the text and the context of *bayān,* which means the way a *bayānist* explains religious messages by telling his audience about simple things, such as babies and *ruh* (the soul), and linking these to the religious experience of Muslims. I pointed out at the beginning of this chapter that both written and non-written evidence are important for Muslims. For this reason, the *āyah* is not only found in the Qur'an, but potentially everything can become an *ayah* (Schimmel, 1994: xiii). This, I assume, means that there is a link between the text and context that is to some extent produced by the *bayānist*, as he seeks to control the outcomes of the *bayān* session. Part of this dimension is the link between the content of the sermon and the response of the audience, including emotional responses such as crying or manifesting a strong spirit to do *da'wa*. To put it another way, it relates to two interrelated situations: how the *bayān* is constructed, and how it is interpreted and understood in the minds and imaginations (*khayālī*) of *karkūn*.

For this reason, *bayānists* start by grounding their *bayān*, with reference to *āyah kawniyyah* and *āyah qawliyyah* as the foundation for their sermon, such as the experience of the young man who wanted to understand the meaning of life, or the Tablighist search for knowledge such as *Fadhīlat 'Amal* (the virtues of religious activities) as Safar told me. Nevertheless these religious texts must be understood in order to arrive at the belief in the oneness of God: Allah through *lā ilā ha illā Allāh*. This becomes then centre of the sermon and the audience is told that this is the ultimate truth of every religious text. In other situations, the objective of the *bayān* is to bring the congregation closer to Allah through the understanding that we are His creation. And as a result of this focus on the Creator of the world, the Tablighists are transported into an understanding of the world as reflecting the Oneness of God. In this sense, the foundational culture of Jamā'ah Tablīgh is *lā ilāha illā allāh*. By repeating this phrase in every discussion, *karkūn* bind their religious activities to a central theme of Islamic theology, that of the Oneness of God (*tauhid*). In Islamic studies, this discussion is part of *'ilm al-kalām* which deals mostly with theology (*aqīdah*). As mentioned in the earlier part of this study, being Muslim first and foremost is to have a correct understanding of the Oneness of Allah.

This helps to explain why when the *bayānist* spells out the explanation of *'aqīdah* (theology), the audience becomes emotional. In this situation,

the *bayānist* is fighting the minds of the audience. If the audience were to protest or pose questions they would be defeated by reference to *ayah kawniyyah* and *ayah qawliyyah*. This is also supported by the condition that during a *bayān* session, there is no question and answer session. Furthermore, when the minds of the *karkūn* have been subverted during *bayān*, then controlling their hearts becomes the central mechanism for controlling them.

This is part of the work of the *bayānist* – to construct and disseminate his religious knowledge and understanding in such a way that he can pass on his level of awareness to *karkūn* who do not share his level of religious understanding. While the *bayānist's* understanding may be equalled by others who already have a degree of spiritual awareness, this level of understanding is not common. To be a *bayānist* also requires a level of spiritual experience. Those *bayānists* with higher levels of religious experience also have the capacity to produce a greater level of spiritual and religious awareness in the hearts and souls of their fellow *karkūn*.

Besides this, a *bayānist* must be aware of his audience's different levels of understanding of religious texts. Thus, before *bayān*, *karkūn* are reminded to watch for any intellectual hubris as in the audience as the *bayānist* will tend to use examples taken from general human life. However, he may also draw on some of the experiences of his audience to support his argument. In this model, the religious text, under the umbrella term *lā ilā ha illā Allāh*, becomes the source of the production of theology and spirituality among *karkūn*.

By using *ta'wīl* (spiritual hermeneutic) which literally means "to take something back to its origin or beginning" (Nasr, 1964: 103), we can see that by exploring texts (*qawniyyah* and *qawliyah*), the audience may understand the meaning of the narration by themselves. However, during *bayān*, many *bayānists* will start by telling the *ayah qawniyyah*, which means that he does not always refer to the Qur'an. In addition this situation that is telling the ayah qawniyyah can be examined by the process of transferring the Oneness (*tawhid*) to the audience. If the audience has a clear understanding of Allah, then the *bayānist* will begin by setting out the path for entering the word of Allah. This is a process of moving from the *dhāhir* (exoteric) to the *bāthin* (esoteric), as discussed in previous chapters. Nasr says that "every phenomenon implies a noumenon, or, in Islamic terms, every exterior (*dhāhir*) must have an interior (*bāthin*). The process of *ta'wīl*...means going from the *dhāhir* to the *bāthin*, from the outward reality to inner one" (Nasr, 1964: 103). The way the *bayānist* reminded his audience of Divine creation was a method for moving the hearts and souls of *karkūn* to *bāthin*. The audience cried

because there was a meeting between their religious experience and the *bāthin* situation.

The second dimension in which to analyse *bayān* has to do with the link between the message and the religious experience of the audience. The listening and emotional responses observed during *bayān* are also arguably part of the religious journey of the *karkūn*. They are part of the *karkūn's* "climb" from one level of religious awareness to a higher one. This process of producing theology and spirituality is understandable to the audience because *bayān* are typically held after prayers, where *karkūn* have just "met" their God during *shalāt*. The process of sitting close together in order to build a wall to keep the devil from breaking down the brotherhood among *karkūn* is also part of this. They are recommended to sit in front of the *bayānist* but not to chat to each other during a *bayān* session. When the *karkūn* have achieved this, then they will discover *tawajjuh* (power of full concentration). In Sufist teachings, there is a similar situation where the disciple and the saint sit in front of each other, strongly connected through their concentration and focussed attention (Werbner, 2003: 331). During my research I noticed that many *karkūn* did not speak with, or even see, their friends, but only faced the *bayānist*. The word *tawajjuh* is repeated all the time during *bayān* and *mużakarah* sessions, a concept borrowed from the Sufist way of learning. Practically, this can be described as a *murid* (student) listening carefully and with full concentration to the message of his *syaikh* (master). With this way, the teacher is able to give advice and guidance during the lesson.

Here, the religious experience has three characteristics. First, there is the experience that comes from understanding one's belief. Every Muslim has a religious experience on the basis of their worship of Allah. However, this basic experience only involves the level of the individual's understanding of Allah. The closer one is to Allah, the more one feels the impact of the ecstasy of ones *'ibadat*. Thus, the experience of *'ibadat* among Muslims also differs. For example, for those who follow Sufism, worshipping Allah provides them with the experience of feeling the unity of Allah. The second form of religious experience comes from listening to another. Thus, when a *bayānist* tells the audience about someone else's religious experience, they draw on this in their own creative perception of religion and God. The process of creative perception is a process of drawing on different inputs in order creatively to imagine that of the creator and his cosmology. Thus, the emotional response that I saw during *bayān* is a part of the science of imagination, as suggested by Henry Corbin:

> The science of the Imagination is also the sciences of mirrors, of all mirroring "surfaces" and of the forms that appear in them. As the science of the *speculum*, it takes its place in *speculative* theosophy, in a theory of the vision and manifestations of the spiritual, and draws the ultimate consequences from the fact that though forms *appear* in mirrors, they are not in the mirrors (Corbin, 1969: 218).[5]

It can be said that the religious experience reported by the *bayānist* establishes such mirrors for the audience. For those who can see his "creative perception" during the *bayan* session cannot avoid being touched by his emotion. This is because he can make the texts work like a mirror, to go beyond rationality. As we have seen during *bayān*, there are some religious messages that cannot be understood through reason alone.

The third form of religious experience is common or shared religious experience. Here, *karkūn* who have given their commitment to the organisation have certain similar experiences during their involvement in the various activities carried out by members of Jamā'ah Tablīgh. When the *bayānists* are senior *karkūn*, they share an understanding with other senior *karkūn*, and, as a result, senior *karkūn* and *bayānists* can then share these common religious experiences with junior *karkūn* who spend time with them on *khurūj*. This common religious experience is also reflected in the fact that higher level *bayānists* tend to attract more senior members to their *bayān*. For example, when I was in Pekan Baru there were many *mawlana*s, and the people around them tended to be senior *karkūn* from Kuala Lumpur and Jakarta.

The third dimension in which to analyse *bayān* relates to what should be done after it. The main aim of *bayān* is to organise a group to undertake *khurūj*. In relation to overseas *khurūj* this raises again the issue identified in the previous chapter, of the IPB as preferred destination. Even if much of the content of *bayān* reflects Islam's close historical relationship to the Middle East, the orientation of *da'wa* is nevertheless squarely focused on South Asia. As I argued earlier, there is something of a contest here between South Asian and Middle Eastern Islam. *Mawlana* as the representatives of the international *markāż* never urge the audience to go on the *hajj*, but on the contrary, to go on a *khurūj* to their country. This may be a reason why the Six Points of *bayān* emphasise the lives of the *sahabat*, who dedicated themselves to disseminating Jamā'ah Tablīgh Islam around the world and not merely on the Arabian Peninsula. During *bayān* and other JT activities, the city of Nizamuddin - not Mecca or even Medina - is always described as the central point of *da'wa*. In this chapter

[5] See also Werbner (2003: 188).

we have seen how this contest is played out in the promotion of IPB as the centre for *khurūj* and other Jamā'ah Tablīgh activities. As a consequence, the text and context produced during *bayān* reinforce the view that all roads lead to IPB.

Not every audience member has the same level of religious experience, so *bayānists* must also be able to represent their religious understanding at a general level. Whatever the level of the religious awareness assumed in the *bayān*, all are designed to lead to one conclusion: the necessity of *khurūj*. Thus, at the end of *bayān*, its success is measured by whether the *bayānist* have been able to sell this product, as indicated by the number of *karkūn* who volunteer to do *khurūj*.

The next chapter is a discussion of *khurūj*; I examine how *karkūn* transform the religious emotions and experiences generated by *bayān* into a creative desire to follow the Prophet to live an ascetic, mosque-based form of life in the service of *da'wa*.

# CHAPTER SEVEN

# *KHURŪJ*

## Introduction

In this chapter I focus on the main objective of all the activities discussed in previous chapters: *markāż*, *mushāwarah*, *ijtimā'* and *bayān*, are to send out groups of *karkūn* to perform *da'wa*, or what Tablighists call *khurūj fī sabīlillāh*. This chapter aims to provide ways of understanding this missionary movement, which began in 1926. In previous chapters I have mentioned *khurūj* many times. As we have seen, preparations for *khurūj* at the levels of *mohalla*, *halaqah* and provincial or national *markāż* are discussed in *mushāwarah*. The administration of *khurūj* is one of the main functions of the *markāż*. The objective of *ijtimā'* is to assemble large groups to be sent around the world by coordinating between national and international *markāż*. In sum, much of this study so far has dealt with many programs of Jamā'ah Tablīgh that precede the *khurūj*. In this chapter, I describe the situation of *khurūj* among *karkūn*. To obtain these data, I took part in two three-day *khurūj* in Malaysia with different targets, groups and origins. I did not perform *khurūj* in Aceh, but I did visit places attended by groups of *khurūj* there. This chapter then is based mostly on my experience as a *karkūn* in Kuala Lumpur.

During these trips, I was an "alien" *karkūn*, because I am not Malaysian and do not have *mohalla* or *halaqah* in Kuala Lumpur. Many questions were asked about my presence in the group like: Why are you in this group? What are you doing in Malaysia? Are you funded by Malaysia or a foreign government? Some of them asked me to take part in the forty-day *khurūj*, but I declined politely, because the conditions of my research permit did not allow it. As I said in the chapter on *mushāwarah*, many *karkūn* asked me where I came from, why I could speak Malay fluently, and why I was studying at a Western university. The same questions emerged during *khurūj*. My companions included a retired member of the Malaysian army who had fought with the Communists and been trained to make bombs in the USSR; a manager of Petronas; a staff member of the Malaysian Atomic Energy Commission; lawyers; traders and a professor

at the International Islamic University of Malaysia. This was a well educated and professional group.

Before we examine the nature of *khurūj* among *karkūn*, it is important to have a brief definition of the term. It comes from the Arabic word *kharaja*, which means to go out, walk out, come out, emerge, drive out or ride out, flow out, exude, effuse, go away, depart, leave, retire, protrude, project, stick out, dismount and to leave something (Wehr, 1976: 231-32).[1] In general, *kharaja* implies movement out of one situation into another. Thus, the term *khurūj* means the "practice" or "process" of being moved out. Wehr (1976: 233) defines *khurūj* as "exit, aggression, emergence, departure, exodus, emigration, raid, foray, sortie against, attack, and assault on".

In the Islamic tradition, the word to describe moving from one place to another is *hijrah*, the first day of the Islamic calendar and the term used to refer to the emigration of the Prophet Muhammad from Mecca to Medina in 622. According to Akber S. Ahmed, "*hijra* suggests that Muslims must not live under tyranny, that they must remake their lives elsewhere if necessary in order to practice their faith" (Ahmed 1994: 27). Another word for "moving out" is *isrā' mi'rāj*, the night journey when the Prophet was taken by an angel to Heaven to meet God. There the Prophet received the command that Muslims pray five times a day. Allah has recorded this moment in the Qur'an (Sūrah No. 17) called *al-Isrā'* (the Night Journey).

The phenomenon of "retreat" is very important in the Islamic tradition. As these verses show, after "being away" (*khurūj min ardhi*), the Prophet brought back the second of the Islamic pillars, *shalāt*. After being away

---

[1] *'Kharaja'* is related to a number of terms as detailed by Wehr (1976: 232-234), such as *kharj* (expenditure, something appropriate); *khurj* (saddlebag, portmanteau); *kharja* (exit, departure, protrusion); *kharāj* (tax and land tax); *khurāj* (skin eruption; tumor), and *makhraj* (place of exit). The word is found in the science of pronouncing Arabic words as part of learning to read and recite the Qur'an. This science is known as *'Ilm Tajwīd al-Qur'ān*; *takhrīj* and involves training in pronunciation and education in interpretation and exegesis of the Qur'an (see Zayn al-Fathānī , n.d.). For example, the coming of a word in the mouth is refered to as *makhraj al-hurūf* (the place of the exit of words). The word is also found in the scientific *hadits*, known as *takhrīj al-hadits* (see for example Speight 1995: 83-87 and Hallaq, 2002: 317-336). Here one finds related terms such as *ikhrāj* (taking out, removal); *tawallā al-ikhrāj* (to have the direction, motion, pictures, theater); *takharruj* (graduation from school of college); *takāruj* (separation, disassociation, disengagement, mutual withdrawal); *istikrāj* (industrial productION, mining); *khārij* (outer, outside, outward, exterior, external, foreign); *muhkrij* (director); *mukhraj* (excerpt, extract from a book); *mutakharrij* (graduate of school or college); and *mustakraj* (excerpt, partial copy).

from Mecca (*khurūj min makkah*), the Prophet returned with the Glory of *futuhul al-makkah al-mukarramah*.[2] *Khurūj* is also related to the word *khawārij,* which refers to an historically important group of puritanical Muslims sects from the Marwānī and early 'Abbāsī periods (Hodgson, 1974: 515). The history of the *khawārij* is related to internal conflict among Muslims over the killing of the fourth *Khalīfah Rāsyidūn*, 'Alī ibn Abū Thalib, the son of Abū Thalib, the uncle of the Prophet. The conflict was between Sunni, who supported a leader unrelated to the Prophet, and Shi'a, who believed that 'Ali should be the *Khalīfah Rāshidūn*. Ali ibn Abū Thalib was killed when he became the fourth *khalīfah* and this tragedy was called "the Great *Fitna*" in Muslim history between 656 and 661 CE (William, 1995: 419). During this conflict, the *khawārij* exited from the *fitna,* insisting that all Muslims be treated equally. As Williams writes, "from the first, *khawarij* insisted that all Muslim must be treated equally, regardless of tribe or race (there is no *nasab* [inherited honour). "Even a black slave" might be the first in the community" (William, 1995: 419). Thus, in Islamic tradition, three groups have played an important historical role: Sunni,[3] Shi'a,[4] and *khawārij*, although not a great deal of attention is paid to the *khawārij* in the histories of Sunni and Shi'a, nor are they given much prominence in the contemporary era.

The word *khurūj* indicates that Muslims must "go out" if they want to get "good things" in the world. Even the most holy man, such as the Prophet Muhammad, had to go go from Mecca to Medina in order to acquire his missionary spirit. It seems that only through *khurūj* can a preacher solve the problems in his community. Many historical accounts

---

[2] See some of the stories in Hodgson (1974).

[3] Briefly, the thought of Sunnis dominated *Islamdom*. An introduction to this sect is found Marmura (1995:139-141) and Waardenburgh (1995:141-146). The group is always called *ahl al-sunnah wa al-jamā'ah*. See the introduction in Ibrahim (1998) and Abbas (2006). See also Johansen (1999); Schacht (1975, 1996); Powers (1986); Nyazee (1994); Kamali, (1991); and Gleave and Kermer (1997). These works deal with of the development of Sunni thought, mostly in *fiqh*. However, the best work on the philosophical foundation of Sunnī legal thought is Hallaq (1997, 1996: 33-44), see also Lowry (2002: 23-50); Minhaji (1997, 1999: 12-28). The development of Sunni thought is also discussed in Marlow (1997). J.N.D. Anderson examined the position the legal though in modern era, see Anderson (1959); Masud et.al., (1996).

[4] On *Shī'a*, see Gleave, (2000, 2002:267-292), Brunner and Ende (2000). For a brief overview of *Shī'a*, see Jafri (1995:55-60); Dabashi (1995:60-69). For good discussiosn of *Sunnī* in the mirror of *Shī'a*, see Stewart (1998) and Roberts (1924: 117-118). For a survey of the Shiite system of political thought, see Sachedina (1988). On *Shī'a* tradition, see for example Ayoub (1996:47-54).

tell about great saints or religious scholars exiled from their society for this reason. In Islam, knowledge must be sought as far away as China, as the Prophet said; *utlub al-'ilm walaw bi al-shīn*. Islamic classical sources, mention that seeking knowledge is most rewarding. As stated in the Qur'an in Sūrah al-Mujādilah (the Woman who Pleads, Verse 11): "*...yarfa 'i allāhu al-lażīna amanū minkum wa al-ladzīna ūtū al-'ilma darajāt wa allāhu bimā tamalū khabīr*" (Allah will raise up to (suitable) ranks (and degrees) and who have been granted knowledge, and Allah is well-acquainted with all ye do). Thus it is recommended that Muslims journey or go away as *musāfīr* (travellers) in order to preach Islam and seek knowledge.[5] This emphasis on travel in order to preach and seek knowledge is also important within Jamā'ah Tablīgh. There is no accident that Khalid Masud named his edited book on Jamā'ah Tablīgh *Travellers in Faith* (in Arabic, *Musāfir fi al-Imān*). Besides this, two of the Six Points of Jamā'ah Tablīgh, as we saw in the previous chapter, are seeking *'ilm* (knowledge) and preaching Islam (*da'wa wa at-tablīgh*). In this way, we can argue that *khurūj* is not only a central notion within Islamic practices but is also important within Jamā'ah Tablīgh. Yet for *karkūn* who undertake *khurūj,* the process requires many spiritual steps with no room for negotiation or compromise, because all of the programs must be undertaken in order to achieve the *lā ilā ha illā allāh*. Thus, many *karkūn* who begin with the basic step of becoming preachers must first cleanse their souls through listening to *bayān*, especially on *ikhlās niyyāt* (sincerity of purpose).

Perhaps for these reasons, when I started this project, many scholars told me that if I wanted to learn about Jamā'ah Tablīgh, it was important to understand the role of *khurūj* among *karkūn*. Ernesto Braam, in his three-day outing with JT members in southern Thailand, wrote, "going on *khurūj* requires both spiritual and logistical preparation" (Braam, 2006: 42). Masud explains that:

---

[5] When I was studying at an Islamic boarding school in 1990, I heard the following axiom from my teachers. It was apparently advice given by 'Ali bin Abî Thâlib to people seeking *'ilm* (knowledge): *ya akhī lan tanālul al-'ilma illa bi sittatin sa unbiyūka 'an tafshīlihā bi bayānin: zakā'un wa hirsun wa dirhām, wa ijtihādun was suhbat al-ustāż wa thūlu al-zamān*. (O...my friend you will not receive the knowledge without six conditions that I will explain to you: intelligence, strong curiosity, money, studying hard, having a good friendship with the teacher, and knowing that the process of study requires a long time). Unfortunately, I have been unable to identify the source. In Acehnese tradition, the student who is away from his family learning Islamic studies in *dayah* (Islamic traditional school) is called a *meudagang* (trader). See Siegel (1969).

> These travels [are] organized according to a strict discipline and program, which includes *ta'līm* (learning sessions) and the practice of six basic tenets of *tablīgh*. The method of *tablīgh* and its rules and regulations came to the fore in [Jamā'ah Tablīgh] (Masud, 2000: 24).

Being away is also important in the Sufi tradition and can be traced from the history of mystical Islam. It is not surprising that scholars such as Reetz (2003) and Sikand (2007) also find the principles of Jamā'ah Tablīgh activity in India and Pakistan known as *chilla*, a key part of what Sufis also call *chilla,* which is the central point when a student learns about *tarekat* from his master. As Schimmel writes:

> The master watches every moment of the disciple's spiritual growth; he watches him particularly during the *forty-day period* of mediation (*arba'īn, chilla*) that became, very early, a regular institution in the Sufi path (derived, as Hujwīrī says, from the forty day fast of Moses, when he hoped for a vision from God, as related in Sūrah 7:138) (Schimmel, 1975: 103).

The name of this Sūrah is al-A'rāf (the Heights) and some of its verses tell of the Prophet Moses and his struggle against the Pharaoh. However, Schimmel quotes this verse incorrectly, as in this Sūrah Allah says: "*wa wa'adnā mūsā tsalātsīna lailatan wa atmamāhā bi 'asyri fatamma mīqātu rabbihi arba'īna lailah wa qāla mūsā li akhīhi hārūn 'akhlufnī fī qawmī wa ashlih wa lā tatabi' sabīla al-mufsidīn*" (I appointed for Moses *thirty nights, and completed (the period) with ten (more)*: thus was completed the term (of communication) with his Lord, *forty nights*. And Moses had charged his brother Aaron (before we went up): "Act for me amongst my people: Do right, and follow not the way those who do mischief"). Allah also mentions this number in His Message to the Children of Isrā'il in Surah al-Baqarah (2: 51): "*wa idz wa'adnā mūsā arba'īna laylatan tsumma attakhadztum al-'ijla min ba'dihi wa antum dhālimūn*" (And remember We appointed Forty nights for Moses and his absence ye took the calf (for worship) and ye did grievous wrong). The "forty days" was also done by Jesus in the wilderness, before he took his ministry (see Matthew, iv.2). It can be said that being away for forty days does not come from the Sufi path, as many scholars have argued (Reetz, 2003, 2005; Sikand, 2007), but rather from the tradition of Abrahamic religion starting from Moses with his followers, Bānī Isrā'īl.[6] Schimmel maintains that

[6] Allah in Sūrah al-Baqarah has recorded this history, regarding how Moses taught the Banī Isrā'il in Section 5 (40-61). In this story, Allah clearly says that Banī Isrā'il was saved by Allah from the Pharaoh. This is a hard trial by Allah to Bānī

"forty [is] the number of patience and trial, the number of days of seclusion that the adept undergoes at the beginning of the Path. The number forty is often identical with 'multitude' and is thought to comprise an almost infinite number of items" (Schimmel, 1975: 94).

I now turn to the practice of *khurūj* among the members of Jamā'ah Tablīgh and describe how *karkūn* are attracted to dedicate time, money and their own efforts to go on *khurūj*, leaving their families and jobs behind. The next section discusses the process of the *khurūj* itself, how *karkūn* are introduced to its missionary ideals and inducted into its practices. The content of *khurūj* programs is described in the subsequent section, which contains a discussion of some rituals in which I was involved as a Muslim and a researcher. The final section contains an analysis and conclusion

## The preparation for *Khurūj*

As described in the chapter of *bayān*, after a sermon finishes, the atmosphere inside a mosque is like in a market. As Braam writes: "after the *bayān*, especially in the evening when the mosque was more crowded, another Tablīghi would stand up next to the *bayān* teller and appeal to the local non-Tablīgh Malay Muslim to go on *khurūj*. This was the liveliest part of the day in mosque" (Braam, 2006: 43). However, during my fieldwork, not every *karkūn* who stood up wanted to go on *khurūj*. I was a bit confused when I saw this, because it could not be imagined that *karkūn* would actually go on *khurūj* the next day. In fact, this was only a "drama" to show the audience that *karkūn* have a strong intention to go on *khurūj*. After the *bayān* was delivered, I heard people speak about *jamā'ah cash.* I suddenly suspected that there is a *jamā'ah non-cash* or *jamā'ah credit*. My interpretation was not wrong. The *jamā'ah cash* is a group of *karkūn* who register their names with the *jamā'ah tasykīl* to go on *khurūj* in the next scheduled period. The *jamā 'ah cash* is also for those who want to travel the next day on a three-day *khurūj*. Thus, the "market" situation is a way to credit their names with *jamā'ah tasykīl*. When the *bayān* ends, many *karkūn* ask to go on *khurūj* just to register the intention in their souls. The *bayānist* encourages *karkūn* to have an intention in their hearts, because

---

Isrā'īl (Verses no.49). Allah also like very much to this community as He say in verses no.47: *Ya bānī Isrā'īl użkurū na'matī al-latī an'amtu 'alaykum wa 'annī fadhdhaltukun 'alā al-'ālamīn* (O Children of Israel call to mind the (special) favor which I bestowed upon you, and *that I preferred you to all other* (for my Messenger) (my italics).

when Muslims have intentions in their hearts, and Allah knows this, then He will guide them.

After *'isha* prayer, there is a call for those who want to go on *khurūj* to meet *jamā'ah tasykīl*. During this meeting, the names of those *jamā'ah cash* who are interested in making the long *khurūj* will be scheduled for an interview (*tafakkud*), in which they will be questioned about their preparations and permission to leave work. This process sometimes takes a few weeks. The departure must be coordinated with the international *markāż*. For those travelling inside the country, the state *markāż* will consider the requests from other *markāż* in the country. *Karkūn* should submit their names, the proposed timing and the status of their preparations, including money for themselves and their families. During my interviews, I asked *karkūn* how they manage to leave their work to go on *khurūj*. One *karkūn* in Kuala Lumpur who travelled to IPB said that he chose to take leave without pay for the time he was on *khurūj*. He said that his salary would be paid by Allah on the Day of Judgment. High school and university students will often arrange to go on *khurūj* during national holidays. Those who want to go on a three-day *khurūj* need not register or attend an interview. A *karkūn* said that this group would gather the next day in front of the sleeping hall.

As someone new to the group, I wondered why Jamā'ah Tablīgh asked their members to go on *khurūj* to IPB. One *karkūn* told me that it was because these three countries are "test places" for *karkūn*. India is a test place because it is hot, Pakistan because it is the coldest place to do *khurūj*. Thus, by participating in *khurūj karkūn* will be tested by weather, food, toilet facilities and lack of clean water. One *karkūn* told me that in Pakistan they could only shower twice a week due to a water shortage. Bangladesh is thought to be the poorest Muslim country,[7] providing another test for *karkūn* delivering the message of *lā ilā ha illā allāh*. This is similar to the conditions faced by the Prophet when preaching during the three-year boycott by the Quraish tribe.[8] In sum, the three countries are *mujāhadah* places for *karkūn*. That is why every *karkūn* is encouraged to do benevolence in the world, but they must start from these countries.

I met several *karkūn* who had just returned from IPB. Safar, an Acehnese in his 60s was looking a little lean after his travels, but said he

---

[7] See Sachs (2005:10-14).

[8] It is reported that when the Prophet was preaching good conduct and morality in Mecca, this tribe boycotted Him and his clans (Hashim and al-Mutallib), refusing them food supplies. Whoever went against this boycott was executed by the tribe. Besides this, the Prophet was prohibited from receiving any help from His fellows. See Rauf, (1964: 40) and Khan (1952).

had had a strong spirit to spread the *lā ilā ha illā allāh* to everyone. He urged me to join Jamā'ah Tablīgh and go on *khurūj* in IPB. A *karkūn* from Jakarta, transiting in Sri Petaling, told me that his experience could not be described, and that he wanted to return to do more *khurūj* in IPB or elsewhere in the world. *Ustāż* Jaka, an Acehnese *karkūn* told me of his experiences in IPB. *Ustāż* Jaka was well known in the *markāż* in Banda Aceh, Jakarta, Sri Petaling and Nizamuddin. He told me that before joining Jamā'ah Tablīgh he had been opposed to the movement. Now he was reluctant to return to Aceh and desired instead to do *da'wa* in IPB for the rest of his life. Unfortunately, he had not understood all the visa requirements at the time of his *khurūj* in IPB and had had a problem with the authorities on the India–Pakistan border, where he was forced to return by truck to the international *markāż* in Nizamuddin. As his companions had already fled to Kuala Lumpur by this time and he could understand neither Urdu nor English, he was forced to return to Kuala Lumpur to continue his *da'wa*. After that, he did not go back to Medan but continued his trip with another *karkūn* to Penang and Thailand until his money ran out.

During the interview, *karkūn* are briefed on the rules, including those for visa application, departures, arrivals and returning to Malaysia and Indonesia. Going to these countries is not easy. It said that those intending to go to IPB must have done a forty-day *khurūj* in their own country. *Karkūn* who want to do forty-day *khurūj* overseas should finish four months in IPB first. IPB countries have strict visa regulations, because of the issue of terrorism. Some *karkūn* have been refused visas to enter the countries of their choice and been forced to choose somewhere else to perform their *khurūj*. During my fieldwork, there was an announcement that *karkūn* would be sent to Australia, Hong Kong, Brazil and China.

The process of going overseas requires more patience than doing *khurūj* in Southeast Asia. ASEAN countries either do not require a visa or give them on arrival for social visits,[9] but there are still limits to the amount of time one can spend in different ASEAN countries on a social visit. As a result, some of the required forty days must be completed in the *karkūn's* own country. Dynnyï, for example, after being away in Pekan Baru and Palembang for a month, continued for another ten days in Johor as part of his forty-day *khurūj*.

A three-day *khurūj* is a must for anyone eager to become a *karkūn*. Arguably, the three-day *khurūj* is the gateway for new members on the

[9] For information on visas in Southeast Asian countries, see Rowthon et.al., (2001).

Tablīghi path. After being away for four months or forty days, *karkūn* are further recommended to make a three-day *khurūj* for each month in their life. We can calculate then that a fully committed *karkūn* like the elder *karkūn* Tuan Haji Rakhmat in Sri Petaling might spend only sixty days with his family in a year.

Before our departure in my first *khurūj*, a *karkūn* gave us a *bayān hidāyah*. This was to remind each *karkūn* that this trip is only for Allah. It was also emphasised that this trip was not about other people, but about the sacrifices of the individual *karkūn* involved. This *bayān* can be called a briefing. On this occasion, the *karkūn* who acted as the *bayānist* was a senior *karkūn* from the state *markāż*. I refer to my field notes:

> A *bayānist* sat on the chair. He started by telling us about the importance of *da'wa* and the experiences of the companions of the Prophet in spreading Islam around the world. He said that to do *khurūj* we must sacrifice our selves, time and funds in order to enter paradise. This is because everyone who goes on *khurūj* will later be part of the community in paradise. This ritual must be done with great sincerity of purpose in the service of Allah. Thus, every *karkūn* should sacrifice all worldly activities to achieve a time for *khurūj*. The *bayānist* also told us about the success of *khurūj* in the name of Allah in one country. He spoke about a group that had just returned from Brazil, and how when they first entered the country they were stopped and interrogated by the authorities, because their clothing was similar to that of Osama Bin Laden. In response one of the *karkūn* replied, "I want to visit my Muslim brothers in your country, because I want to lead them to good behaviour". On saying those words, according to the *bayānist*, the *karkūn* were allowed to enter Brazil. This *bayān* would brief us to have good conduct during our trip, according to the foundations of morality, religion and theology. One of his recommendations during was not to talk to local people in an idle and meaningless way. For example, if there is a farmer carrying a mattock, do not ask him where he wants to go. Or if there a man carrying a towel, do not ask him what he wants to do with that towel (field notes, 18 January 2007).

During the *bayān hidāyah*, the *bayānist* also spoke about how to behave as part of the *karkūn's* spiritual preparation. Here several messages were given on what "to do", on what "less to do", and on several prohibitions whilst on *khurūj*. Firstly, every *karkūn* is expected to do four things and to refrain from four things: The four things to do are: 1) *da'wa*; 2) *ta'lim* (studying); 3) *namāz-o-zikr* (prayer and remembrance of Allah); and 4) *khidmat*. The four things to refrain from or to do less of are 1) sleeping; 2) eating; 3) talking and 4) going outside the mosque. In addition, four things are forbidden, namely 1) to ask a question of anyone;

2) to question your own heart; 3) excessive expenditure; and 4) to take somebody else's things without permission (Reetz, 2003: 4). It seems that during *bayān hidāyah*, the *bayānist* wants to remind each *karkūn* of their intention to live in accordance with these regulations in order to control their desires and temptations. As groups of *khurūj* can be made up of more than seven persons, interpersonal issues could potentially also be a problem. Thus, by reminding *karkūn* of their obligations and intentions here, the *bayānist* is helping them to understand better themselves and other people, including the local people who will receive them.

To sum up, the preparation for *khurūj* can be classified into four areas. First, *karkūn* must start by enhancing their self-intention to *da'wa*. Thus, some *karkūn* say that giving themselves to the path of Allah is more important than the time and financial sacrifice involved. As they told me, many Muslims have money and time, but the challenge for them is how to liberate "the self". Before departing on *khurūj*, *karkūn* must therefore prepare themselves mentally and morally because the trip is like a *hijrah* (moving from one place to other place). Second, it is recommended that those going on *khurūj* meet and understand their fellow *karkūn* before and during *khurūj*. There are various ways of leaving on *khurūj*, such as when *karkūn* who simply started their trip from the *markāż* meet new friends during the trip. Those who depart from *mohalla* or *halaqah* might know each other beforehand and this trip is then a good time to strengthen their sense of brotherhood. Third, *karkūn* who are going on the long *khurūj* to IPB and other countries must know the regulations governing departure and *khurūj*. Many believe that in preparation for the interview *karkūn* must memorise all the procedures of the trip. This is to avoid the gossip that *karkūn* always abandon their families and jobs. Finally, before departure, *karkūn* are advised to learn what they should do during the trip, especially new members.

## The Activity

In this section I describe our activities during the two three-day *khurūj* that I participated in. The first was with a group of *karkūn* from Sri Petaling; the second was my travels with a group of *mohalla* in Sri Perdana Baru. In the first *khurūj* the *karkūn* were quite varied, with different backgrounds and experiences. None of us knew each other before our departure and we had only one meeting in which to introduce ourselves and select an *amīr sāf* (head of group). The second *khurūj* was organised from within a single community of *karkūn*, which has a monthly *khurūj* that departs from a *surau* (prayer house) in Sri Perdana Baru, as

part of *mohalla* program. In the second *khurūj* I understood that the *karkūn* had already organised the target place of *khurūj*. In contrast to the first, the second *khurūj* was well planned and the participants well known to each other. In the first *khurūj* we were assisted by the *markāż* and we followed the directions from the *jamā 'ah tasykīl* to do *khurūj* based on their guidelines. So, during my first *khurūj*, I did not know the target location until a member of *jamā'ah tasykīl* informed us. He told us that we could go on *khurūj* in Sungai Manis. We went there by car, some of us in our own vehicles. The second khuruj I took with a group of Tablighist in *halaqah* Sri Perdana Baru. This time I travelled alone from Kuala Lumpur by car. It was located in a government office area, so I had no problem finding the *surau* in Bandar Sri Kencana. I lived with *khurūj* for seventy-two hours in both cases. However, during my second *khurūj* we had a wedding party in Sri Perdana Baru. Some of us attended the wedding party wearing our gameez.

In this section I describe some of the activities that I performed with *karkūn* as *khurūj* rituals. The main activities were praying together in a mosque and inviting local people to learn some Islamic teachings from the book of *Fadhā'il Amal*. The most interesting aspect of doing *khurūj* is that every *karkūn* must subsequently put into practice something that they have learned from this book. Senior *karkūn* say that in this way *khurūj* is a process of learning together how to behave virtuously before Allah. They emphasise that new *karkūn* should start to behave virtuously and do good conduct as a result of going on *khurūj*. The senior *karkūn* guided newcomers patiently, knowing that new members did not understand perfectly the process of each ritual. The situation was one of mutual respect and learning together in a context where there was no teacher. Everyone could be a teacher and everyone was also a student. But, a sense of seniority was apparent in that senior *karkūn* saw themselves as the "teachers" of new member "students". The more experienced *karkūn* that there are on a *khurūj*, the more lessons can be learned during this process for both new and established members.

The highest position on the *khurūj* was that of *amīr sāf*, the person who coordinated the other *karkūn* over the three days. During meetings, he could transfer his authority to other *karkūn* to be *amīr mushāwarah*, or the person responsible for managing the *mushāwarah*. *Karkūn* told me that we must follow the decisions of the *amīr sāf*. One said that if I wanted to go to the toilet, I must first get the permission of the *amīr sāf*. According to him, this teaches us to respect our leaders and to control our temptations. But, the amir on the first *khurūj* in Sungai Manis tended to be flexible as long as our attitude did not disrupt the rituals. He told me that every *karkūn* was

mature and some of them had conducted *khurūj* in IPB for forty days. So, he continued, they must know how to behave during *khurūj*.

Although the coordinator of the *khurūj,* if the *amīr sāf* lacks knowledge of something, then senior *karkūn* remind him to follow the guidelines of *khurūj*. For example, when some *karkūn* left food outside the *surau* on the first *khurūj*, a senior *karkūn* told the amir that those doing *khidmat ta'ām* should not leave it there, because the devil would urinate on it. The senior *karkūn* was very disappointed with the attitude of those doing *khidmat ta'ām*. He said that we would not finish the food because the devil had eaten it before us.

After prayers, we then had lunch together. There were three big plates with rice and curry, and for each plate, there were three *karkūn*. Uniquely, during this meal, we could not finish the food. The others also did not finish. The senior *karkūn* said, "you see, when you do not follow the rituals, the devil will accompany us". Then, every *karkūn* seemed to understand the message from senior *karkūn* and the *amīr sāf* asked us to not leave food after putting it on the plates.

Each day of the *khurūj* was structured around prayer, meetings and necessary tasks such as food preparation. Some of these rituals and ritualised activities have been discussed in earlier chapters, especially on *bayān* and *mushāwarah*. We held a meeting each morning in order to select *karkūn* to serve as *khidmat* (two persons) and as *bayānist* (one *karkūn* for *maġrib* and one for *shubuh*), and who would read from *Fadhā'il Amal* (Zakariyya, n.d., 2006) during *mużākarah* ("learning together") and chair the *ġast* (inviting people to mosque) in the afternoon. During the morning *mushāwarah* we also discussed the money that each *karkūn* should spend on food. Here, the *mushāwarah* would be chaired by the amir or another *karkūn*. As a result, each *karkūn* knew that his daily duties were based on the decisions made during the *mushāwarah*.

The *karkūn* were also careful not to disturb the administration of prayer such as *imām* or *muazzin*, unless the local people invited them to do so. In other words, during our time in the *surau*, *karkūn* would respect the activities of local people. For example, on the last day of the first *khurūj*, we were informed that the *surau* had invited an *ustāż* to give a lecture on Islamic studies after *maġrib* prayer. The *karkūn* would not go against this schedule, because according to them, we must respect the villagers. However, although treated politely, it was clear that activities of this group of *karkūn* were not always viewed as interesting or important by the local villagers. For example, when we held a *bayān* forum after *maġrib* and *shubuh* during the first *khurūj*, the local people did not attend. A local told me that their *surau* was used by the Jamā'ah Tablīgh every weekend and

that villagers were already familiar with the contents of *bayān*. This indicated that our presence at this *surau* was not very important.

This polite but uninterested attitude marked some of our *khurūj* activities as *karkūn*. Let me further develop this point with reference to the above example, drawn from my first experience of going on *khurūj*. It is worthwhile recalling our initial reception and some of the comments made to me as a researcher and to our group as *karkūn*. On our arrival at the *surau* in the early afternoon, a senior *karkūn* recited a *do'a* in front of the *surau*. Then the *amīr sāf* visited the staff member (*ta'mir*) in charge of the administration of the *surau,* informing him of our arrival. There was no objection from the local people to our staying in the *surau*, but neither was there much interest and they did not join any of our subsequent programs. *Ta'mir* did request that we take into account our surroundings and always keep the place clean. This may have been a reference to an earlier student group of *khurūj* from Sri Petaling. *Ta'mir* told us that earlier this *surau* had been used by the *markāż* as a target place. In fact, there are a few *karkūn* around this *surau*, but most of them were busy with their daily activities. Many said that this *surau* was familiar among *karkūn* in Selangor and Kuala Lumpur. It is worth noting again that most *khurūj* in Malaysia take place in *surau*, rather than in mosques. As mentioned earlier, mosques in Malaysia are controlled by the government, while *surau* are not. Thus, if a group of *khurūj* want to stay in a mosque, they must get formal approval in advance. However, in "private mosques" controlled by the local residents, permission is not needed, particularly in places where there is already a presence of *karkūn*.

One of the important activities on *khurūj* is that of congregational prayer (*shalāt jamā'ah*) at each of the five *shalāt* times. During my *khurūj* I observed how most local people only prayed at the mosque for *maġrib* and *'isha*, and a few at *shubuh*. This indicates that the frequency with which Malay Muslims meet together at the *surau* is not considered important. This is not to say that the *surau* is not important to local people, as in this case they held a regular meeting for religious study every Sunday night. At the meeting I attended, an *ustāż* spoke on the topic of how to understand the Qur'an and Sunnah. There was no discussion of current socio-political issues. On my second *khurūj*, I observed more or less the same level of communal praying, although during *dhuhur* and *'ashar*, a few locals prayed. In this *surau*, the surrounding area was dominated by Malay Muslims. However, the location of the *surau* on my first *khurūj* was an ethnic mix of Indians, Malays and Chinese-Malaysians living in the local area. Because of this situation, my group of *khurūj* dominated prayer times.

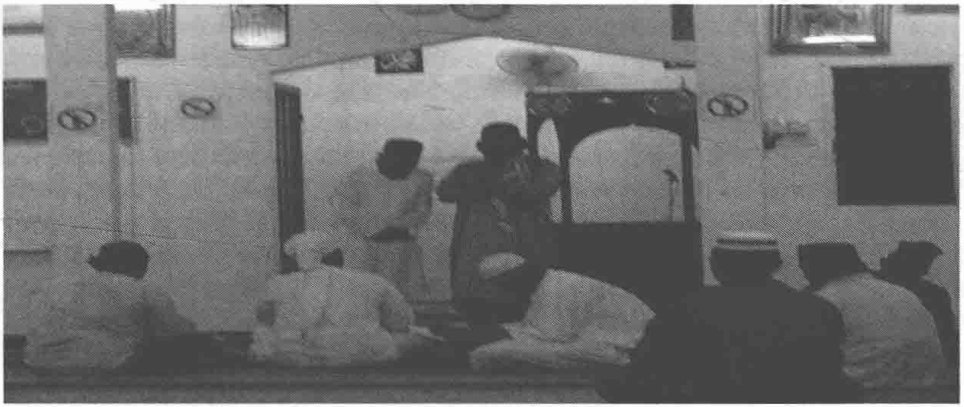


Photo 16 The participants of *khurūj* in *bayān* session (author, 2007).

## *Ġast*

*Ġast* refers to the invitation of people to pray in the *surau*. Some *karkūn* also call this ritual *jaulah*. This activity corresponds closely to the real spirit of *da'wa* in the sense that the *karkūn* visit Muslims in the surrounding area, going from door to door advising them of the importance of belief in Allah and inviting them to attend prayers in the *surau*. There are many types of *ġast*. The first is an invitation for the ordinary Muslim to pray at the *surau*. Here, *karkūn* seek to meet Muslims during their walk during *ġast* time. This is called *ġast umūmī* and most often occurs forty-five minutes before *maġrib* prayer.

A second form of *ġast* – called *ġast khusūsī* – involves visiting elite groups in the surrounding area. There are five target groups in *ġast khusūsī*: the ulama, community leaders, rich and poor people, and *karkūn*. During my first and second *khurūj*, the *karkūn* selected some respected people around the *surau*. Sometimes they targeted a member of parliament or other influential person in the area. The *karkūn* visited their houses around noon, introduced themselves and their mission, and politely invited them to join *karkūn* activities in the *surau*. On my second *khurūj*, we visited the special person after noon prayer. This was because during this *ġast*, the *karkūn* would enter the house and the special person would be in their house. But during the first *ġast*, *karkūn* only stood in front of the door. It can be said that the more famous *karkūn* there are in the group, the easier it is to approach the elite in the area.

The third form of *ġast* is *ġast ta'limi*, which can be defined as inviting people to attend religious study in the *surau* during *mużākarah* times. This *ġast* takes place in the morning after the ninety minutes of *mużākarah* (described below). Two participants of *khurūj* go outside to meet people on the street, in order to invite them to the *surau* to join the discussion group. The difference between *ġast khusūsī* and *ġast ta'limī* is that the latter is performed by only two *karkūn,* who do not visit the house. They only ask people when they walk around the *surau*. If they do not meet anyone, they return to the forum to continue their religious study. During my *khurūj*, this ritual of inviting people to attend religious discussion was not taken very seriously. When Mohammad Saman asked me to go out of the *surau*, he just walked around and did not meet anyone. When I asked why we did not approach some Malays in the cafe over the road, he only smiled and did not answer, instead asking me to go back to the *surau.* During my second *khurūj*, I was asked by a *karkūn* to participate in this ritual. As we left the *surau* I saw that there were many Malays outside, but my friend walked in another direction where there was no-one. When I asked him to approach those on the street, he just smiled and after walking a few hundred metres, we returned to the forum. I could see that both of my friends had avoided meeting people, because they were shy.

At 6.00 p.m. on our first day at the *surau* in Sungai Manis, the *amīr sāf* asked every *karkūn* to attend a *mushāwarah* on the preparation of *ġast*. I did not know the meaning of this term, but from the situation I guessed that this implied a *żiarah* ("visiting") of local people to invite them to pray together in the *surau* followed by a *bayān* session. There are five different elements of *ġast*. Firstly, there are *karkūn* called *mutakallim* who are selected to meet with the local people. The main job of *mutakallim* is to talk politely with locals about the aim of our visit to their house – that is, to invite them to pray in the *surau* and attend the *bayān* session. There was also a *karkūn* selected to recite *żikir* during this ritual. He sat in the *surau* facing *qiblah* and reciting *żikir*, that is, *la ilā ha illā allāh*. After *maġrib* prayer, he would then give *bayān* for forty-five minutes. There was also a *karkūn* who acted as the head of *ġast.* His job was to remind the *karkūn* (or *jamā'ah*) who went outside the *surau* to recite *la ilā ha illā allāh*, not to comment on the ritual. He also informed them that the purpose of this *khurūj* was to decrease the ego of participants. The head of *ġast* was always accompanied by *dalīl* or *ruhaba*. *Dalīl* is a guide and mostly a local *karkūn*. His job is simply to knock on doors and politely introduce the *jamā'ah* to local people. After introducing the group, the *mutakallim* will talk about the aim of their visit.

The group walks in lines. In the first line is the head of *ġast*, *mutakallim* and *dalīl*, while in the second line are other *karkūn* who recite *la ilā ha illā allāh*. On my second *khurūj*, two *karkūn* were appointed to recite *la ilā ha illā allāh*. One of their other jobs was to guide local men seen as potential recruits to listen to the *bayān* before *maġrib*. So, those in the second line also accompany any potential recruit who is interested in knowing directly about the group, after the *mutakallim* has spoken with them.

Before each day of *khurūj,* a senior *karkūn* introduced the rules of *ġast* (*adab ġast*). He mentioned that this *da'wa* is not for others, but for ourselves. He said that during this ritual we must keep reciting *lā ilā ha illā allāh*, because this work is only for Allah. He said that when greeting householders, we should do so with sincere intentions, because some local people will accuse the *jamā'ah* of being strangers. That is why the *ruhaba* or *dalīl* play an important mediating role between the group and local people. We were told that if there is no response after saying *salām* three times, we must assume that there is nobody at home. While in this group, I observed that some Malay Muslims did not want to open their doors, because they recognised the group and were not interested. At other times it may have been because the residents were women or children, and if a woman or child opened the door, the *ruhaba* or *mutakallim* always asked: "Is there a man at home?" If the answer was positive, then they would ask to talk to him. If there was no man at home, they would say: "Please tell your father/husband that we will have a gathering in the *surau* tonight". However, if the door was answered by a fellow *karkūn*, then he would simply smile at the visit. During this form of *ġast*, the group would not enter the house because they wanted to visit as much of the surrounding area as possible to invite local men to the *surau*.

The other activity of *karkūn* during *khurūj* is *takrīr* ("remaining"). This ritual is almost the same as *bayān*. While some went to out to invite locals to pray in the *surau* and while the *bayānist* recited *żikir*, a *takrīr* process was also underway in the *surau*. On the first day of first *khurūj*, I was in the audience for this *takrīr* session. The *amīr sāf* talked to us about how life would be without the words of *la ilā ha illā allāh*. He asked me to sit very close to him and only listen to his message. In this way, *takrīr* can be seen as a one-on-one *bayān*. About three metres away another *karkūn* was reciting *żikir,* but he was not involved in *takrīr*. In fact, this "one-on-one *bayān*" is aimed at delivering a religious message to those potential members targeted during the *surau* prayers and *bayān* by the *karkūn* who accompany the *ġast* caravan reciting *la ilā ha illā allāh.*

On this occasion, after about half an hour, the *jamā'ah* came back to the *surau* with no result. One of them told us that most of the residents were on vacation. They also reported that there were two *karkūn* who would join our program that night (listening to *bayān*). Below I describe my experience of *ġast* as recorded in my field notes:

> We prayed outside the *surau* before we walked together. I was in the middle of the second line. A local person was behind me as *ruhaba*, and Ahmed Nassim as *amīr ġast*. He kept reciting *subhān Allāh walhamdulillah* during our walk. We walked around the neighbourhood of the *surau*. When we stopped at a house, Mohammed Samman said: *Assalāmu'alaykum*. There was no answer after the third time so we just passed this house. Ahmed Nassim told me that we should have no prejudice towards the occupant in our minds and souls. It could be, according to him, that the resident of this house was not in, or was taking a shower, or praying.
>
> We continued our visit to a few more houses. There was no answer from the first. We assumed that because today is Sunday, they may be on vacation. For a second, I did see there were a few people inside, but they did not answer the *salām*. Ahmed Nassim said to me quietly and calmly that we must reduce our ego if we do this ritual. This statement touched my heart, because I understood, he is a businessman and well educated, but he still could reduce his ego.
>
> As we passed the houses, we always noted whether the house was Chinese, Indian or Malay. Usually, at Malay houses we saw a symbol of Islam such as the word of Allah or Islamic pictures/symbols. This use of symbols was also common with Chinese and Indian houses. We always said that it was Chinese house if we saw some Buddhist symbols (field notes, 18 January 2007).

I had a different impression of *ġast* during my second *khurūj*, which was done in an area of government staff apartments where we had to select one of several towers as our focus. Then we were advised by a *karkūn* to select the number of floors we would visit. After this selection we walked to the tower. We knocked on one door after another in order to tell the occupants about our mission. But they already seemed to know about us. A policeman even said that he could not visit the *surau*, because he was on night shift. What surprised me was that children tended to listen and go with us to the *surau*. I accompanied one of the children who came to listen to a one-on-one *bayān* in the surau. He was seven years old and walked to his friends' house to tell them to shower as soon as possible in order to come to the *surau*. In fact, during our *khurūj* the children were very curious about the mission. When we asked them to go on *khurūj* many of them stood up raising their hands, registering their names as *karkūn*.

On my second *khurūj*, we had two well-known people with us, one a well-placed government member. They knew the houses of the very important people in the surrounding area. These *karjkūn* used a car to do *ġast khusūsī*. One who works at Petronas said that he was not afraid giving this message (*lā ilā ha illā Allāh*) to any one on the planet. In fact, their efforts were successful and I saw some respected Malays joining our group. They slept with us on the second day. They did not wear gameez or any *karkūn* accessories. Thus, on my second *khurūj* we got some Malays to join our program in the *surau*. They were later invited to join the *malam markāż* in Sri Petaling on Saturday nights.

*Gast* is another aspect of *khurūj* (go outside) doing *da'wa*. Put simply, *karkūn* go from their house to visit an unfamiliar *surau*. There they walk around to invite Muslims to participate in their activities in the *surau* as part of *ġast*. *Gast* is also part of the *mohalla* and *halaqah* program. The difference is that during the weekly *ġast* ritual as part of *mohalla* and *halaqah*, the *karkūn* might know the houses they are targeting, while *karkūn* on *khurūj* do not necessarily know who they are targeting and do this only for three days. In both situations, the aim is to remind fellow Muslims about *la ilā ha illā allāh*. If they are interested and open, then the *karkūn* invite them to the place of *khurūj* to listen to the *bayān*. Thus, during *ġast* there is no time for *karkūn* to talk in any depth, or for the local non-*karkūn* to respond immediately.

## *Ta'lim and mużākarah*

During my *khurūj*, the *ta'lim* or *mużakarah* sessions were not my favourite rituals. The word *ta 'limi* come from *'alima* or *'ilm* (science) which means the process of learning. The word *mużakarah* comes from *żakara* or *żikir* (to remember) Allah, which can be defined as a process of reminding each other. This was a time when *karkūn* read *Fadhā'il 'Amal* by Mawlana Muhammad Zakariyya al-Kandahlawi and performed other rituals such as how to protect one's cleanliness during a bowel movement and how to read the Qur'an. Here, the process of religious learning is held during *khurūj*. It lasted about two and a half hours, starting after breakfast and stopping an hour before noon prayer. So, over three days, we spent seven and a half hours reading this book. The *karkūn* who read was selected on the basis of seniority, on the assumption that he would best know which chapters must be read in the session.

Besides that, *karkūn* also read *Muntakhab Ahadits* by Syaikh Mawlana Muhammad Yusuf al-Kandahlawi (2006) after *'isha'* prayer.[10] Regarding my experience of *ta'lim* or *mużakarah*, I refer to my field notes:

> When *mużakarah* started, a *karkūn* read *Fadhā'il Amal*. The other *karkūn* just listened with *tawajjuh*. When there was a reference to a miracle or the virtues of worshipping Allah, they would recite: *subhān Allāh*. After several chapters, two *karkūn* went outside the surau to perform *ta'lim ġast*. After 15 minutes they came back to the *surau* without any result. We had to sit very close to each other. The *karkūn* who read from the book was the senior *karkūn*. He knew which chapter must be read in this session. Suddenly, after two people came back, Mohammed Saman asked me to go with him on another *ta'lim ġast* (field notes, 18 January 2007).

After we finished this session, a *karkūn* asked us to sit two-by-two as shown in the photo above. Here, we began to read a number of *sūrah* from copies of the Qur'an that the *karkūn* had found in the *surau*. Here, most new members are accompanied by a senior *karkūn*. The purpose of this was to read the Qur'an perfectly, without grammatical error. It is said that if we read the Qur'an without perfect knowledge, we may read it wrongly or recite incorrectly with the wrong meaning. A *karkūn* told me that the word *kalbu* (dog) is different from the word of *qalb* (heart). Therefore it is very important for Muslims to read the Qur'an with perfect pronunciation. As mentioned above, the science of how to read the Qur'an is called *makhārij al-huruf*. One message from senior *karkūn* is that one must not be shy during this practice; according to them, some Muslims do not want to read the Qur'an, because they are not used to it. Thus, good intention (*ikhlās niyyat*) is mentioned before this ritual. I read the Qur'an with the *amīr sāf*. He said that every Acehnese could read the Qur'an with a beautiful sound. Here the *karkūn* started to recite Sūrah al-Fātihāh and other *sūrah* in the last part of the Qur'an, as follows:[11]

a. *Sūrah al-Fātihah* (The Opening)
*Bismillāhi al-rahmān al-rahīm* (In the name of Allah: Most gracious, most merciful)
*Al-hamdulillāhi rabb al-'alamīn* (Praise be to Allah the cherisher and sustainer of the Worlds)
*Ar-rahmān al-rahīm* (Most gracious, most merciful).
*Māliki yawm al-dīn* (Master of the day of judgement)
*Iyyāka na'budu wa iyyaka nasta'īn* (Thee do we worship and thine aid we seek)

[10] On the book, see Metcalf (1993:584-608).
[11] The English translation is based from Ali (1989).

*Ihdinā al-shirāthal al-mustaqīm* (Show us the straight way)
*Shirāth al-lażīna an'amta 'alayhim ġair al-maġdhūb 'alayhim walā al-dzāllīn* (The way of those on whom thou has bestowed thy grace, those whose (portions) is not wrath, and who go not astray).

b. *Sūrah al-'Ashr* (Time through the ages)
*Bismillāhi al-rahmān al-rahīm* (In the name of Allah: Most gracious, most merciful)
*Wa al-'ashr* (By (the token of) time (through the ages)
*Inna al-insān lafī khusr* (Verily man is in loss).
*Illā al-lażīna āmanū wa 'amilū al-shalihāt wa tawashaw bi ash-shabr* (Except such as those who have faith and do righteous deeds, and (join together) in the mutual teaching of truth and of patience and constancy)

c. *Sūrah al-Humazah* (The Scandalmonger)
*Bismillāhi al-rahmān al-rahīm* (In the name of Allah: Most gracious, most merciful)
*Wayl likulli humazat limazah* (Woe to every (kind) of scandalmonger and backbiter)
*Allażī jama'a mā lā wa 'addah* (Who pileth up wealth and layeth it by).
*Yahsabu anna mā lahu akhladah* (Thinking that his wealth would make him last forever)
*Kallā layunbadzanna fī al-huthamah* (By no means! He will be sure to be thrown into that which breaks to pieces).
*Wa mā adraka al- huthamah* (And what will explain to thee that which breaks to pieces?)
*Nār Allāh al-mūqadah* (It is the fire of (the wrath of) Allah kindled (to a blaze).
*Allatī taththali'u 'alā al-af'idah* (That which doth mount (straight) to the hearts)
*Innahā 'alayhim mu'shadah* (It shall be made into a vault over them)
*Fī 'amadin mumaddadah* (In columns outstretched).

d. *Sūrah al-Fīl* (The Elephant)
*Bismillāhi al-rahmān al-rahīm* (In the name of Allah: Most gracious, most merciful)
*Alam tara kayfa fa'ala rabbuka bi ashhābi al-fīl* (Seest thou not how thy Lord dealt with the companions of the elephants).
*Alam yaj'al kaydahum fī tadhlīl* (Did he not make their treacherous plan go astray?)
*Wa arsala 'alayhim thairān abābīl* (And he sent against them flights of birds)
*Tarmihim bihijāratin min sijjīl* (Striking them with stones of baked clay)
*Faja'alahum ka'ashfin ma'kūl* (Then did he make them like an empty field of stalks and straw, (of which the corn) has been eaten up).

e. *Sūrah Quraisy* (The Tribe of Quraish)
*Bismillāhi al-rahmān al-rahīm* (In the name of Allah: Most gracious, most merciful)
*Liīlāfi Quraisy* (For the covenants (of security and safeguard enjoyed) by the Quraisy)
*Īlāfihim rihlat asy-shitāi wa al-shaif* (The covenants (covering) journey by winter and summer)
*Falya'abudu rabba haża al-bayt* (Let them adore the Lord of this house)
*Allażī 'athma'ahum min jū'in wa'amanahum min khawf* (Who provides them with food against hunger, and with security against fear (of danger).

f. *Sūrah al-Mā'ūn* (Neighbourly Assistance)
*Bismillāhi al-rahmān al-rahīm* (In the name of Allah: Most gracious, most merciful)
*Ara'ayta allażī yukadzdzibu bi al-dīn* (Seest thou one who denies the Judgements (to come?)
*Fadzalika allażī yadu'u al-yatīm* (Then such is the (man) who repulses the orphans (with harshness)
*Walā yahudhdhu 'alā tha'āmim al-miskīn* (And encourages not the feeding of the indigent)
*Fawaylun lil al-mushallīn* (So woe to the worshippers)
*Allażīna hum 'an shalātihim sāhūn* (Who are neglectful of their prayers)
*Allażīna hum yurā'ūn* (Those who (want but) to be seen (of men).
*Wa yamna'ūna al-mā'ūn* (But refuse (to supply) (even) neighbourly needs)

g. *Sūrah al-Kawtsar* (The Abundance)
*Bismillāhi al-rahmān al-rahīm* (In the name of Allah: Most gracious, most merciful)
*Innā 'athaināka al-kawtsar* (To thee have we granted the fount (of abundance)
*Fashalli lirabbika wanhar* (Therefore to thy Lord turn in prayer and sacrifice)
*Inna shāni'aka huwa al-abtar* (For he who hateth thee– he will be cut off (from future hope)

h. *Sūrah al-Kāfirūn* (Those who reject faith)
*Bismillāhi al-rahmān al-rahīm* (In the name of Allah: Most gracious, most merciful)
*Qul yā'ayyuhā al-kafirūn* (Say: O ye that reject faith)
*Lā 'abudu mā ta'abudūn* (I worship not that which ye worship)
*Walā antum 'ābidūna mā 'a'bud* (Now will ye worship that which I worship)
*Walā anā 'ābidum mā 'abadtum* (And I will not worship that which ye have been wont to worship)

*Walā antum 'ābidūna mā 'a'bud* (Now will ye worship that which I worship)
*Lakum dīnukum waliya dīn* (To you be your way, and to me mine)

i. *Sūrah al-Nashr* (The Help)
*Bismillāhi al-rahmān al-rahīm* (In the name of Allah: Most gracious, most merciful)
*Idzā jā'a nashr Allāh Allah wa al-fath* (When comes the help of Allah, and victory)
*Warayta al-nās yadkhulūna fī dīn afwājā* (And thou dost see the people enter Allah's religion in crowds)
*Fasabbih bihamdi rabbika wa 'staghfirhu innaḫu kāna tawwābā* (Celebrate the praises of thy lord, and pray for his forgiveness: For he is oft-returning (in grace and mercy))

j. *Sūrah al-Lahab* (The Flame)
*Bismillāhi al-rahmān al-rahīm* (In the name of Allah: Most gracious, most merciful)
*Tabbat yadā' 'abī lahab wa tabb* (Perish the hands of the Father of flame perish he!)
*Mā aghnā 'anhu mā lahū wa mā kasab* (No profit to him from all his wealth and all his gains)
*Sayashlā nārān dzāta lahab* (Burnt soon will he be in a fire of blazing flame)
*Wamra'atuh hammālata al-hathab* (His wife shall carry the (crackling) wood – as fuel)
*Fī jīdihā hablum min masad* (A twisted rope of palm leaf fibre round her (own) neck)

k. *Sūrah al-Ikhlāsh* (The Purity of Faith)
*Bismillāhi al-rahmān al-rahīm* (In the name of Allah: Most gracious, most merciful)
*Qul huwa Allah ahad* (Say: He is Allah the One and Only)
*Allah al-shamad* (Allāh, the External, Absolute)
*Lam yalid wa lam yūlad* (He begetteth not, not is He begotten)
*Wa lam yakun laḫu kufūwwān ahad* (And there is none like unto Him)

l. *Sūrah al-Falaq* (Daybreak)
*Bismillāhi al-rahmān al-rahīm* (In the name of Allah: Most gracious, most merciful)
*Qul 'a'ūżu bi rabb al-falaq* (Say: I seek refuge with the Lord of the Dawn)
*Min sharri mā khalaq* (From the mischief of darkness as it spreads over)
*Wa min sharri ġāsiqin iżā waqab* (From the mischief of those who practice secret arts)
*Wa min sharri al-naffāsāt fī al-'uqad* (And from the mischief of the envious one as he practices envy)

m. *Sūrah al-Nās* (Humankind)
*Bismillāhi al-rahmān al-rahīm* (In the name of Allah: Most gracious, most merciful)
*Qul 'a'ūdzubi rab al-nās* (Say: I seek refuge with the Lord and cherisher of mankind)
*Mālik al-nās* (The King (or Ruler) of mankind)
*Ilāḫ al-nās* (The god (of Judge) of mankind)
*Min sharri al-waswāsi al-khannās* (From the mischief of the whisperer (of Evil), who withdraws (after his whisper).
*Allażī yuwaswisu fī shudūr al-nās* ((The same) who whispers into the hearts of mankind)
*Min al-jinnah wa al-nās* (Among djinns and among men)

After we read these *sūrah*, I asked the amir why we should read these *sūrah* in this session and he replied: "Because the *sūrah* are very short and we always recite them during our *shalāt*". This was the same answer I was given when I did my second *khurūj*. After I read the *sūrah*, I eagerly awaited some discussion of the relationship between the content of their and the rituals and practices of the *karkūn*. However, no discussion was forthcoming and the *karkūn* only reminded me that we need to read the Qur'an with knowledge of *tawjīd*. When we perform *shalāt*, we should memorise the *sūrah* perfectly. After we recited, we finished the session with no further discussion.

There were, however, other topics of discussion that I observed during our daily *mużākarah*. Below are some topics discussed by *karkūn* that I recorded in my field notes from the *mużākarah* on the third day of my first *khurūj*:

> *Karkūn* studied the *adab* of going to the toilet and doing "number one" and "number two". A Pakistani *karkūn* showed us how to sit on the water closet. A Malay *karkūn* rejected his way by saying: "Please don't do it that way in Malaysia anymore!" He said that that his style was totally wrong and confused. He continued: "We follow the tradition of the Prophet which is written in *hadīts*". I did not know which one was correct. But Pakistani *karkūn* told us how to do "number two" according to Islamic tradition. However, he could not explain this in perfect Malay. Another Malay *karkūn* made similar comments to his Malay friend, without really understanding the explanation. The Pakistani then explained his message in Urdu, while the Malays rebutted in Malay. I thought there was a misunderstanding between them. A Malay who could speak Urdu translated the point of view of the Pakistani who argued that there was another tradition from the Prophet. We agreed on this in the forum, because he and Mohammed Saman had conducted 4 months *khurūj* in IPB. They said that in Pakistan, it is very hard to find water for shower and "other things". The Pakistani added that in his village, the people had not

taken showers for five years. A Malay said: "it is impossible not to shower for five years". According to him, it is compulsory for a Muslim spouse after having sex and "having dreams" to have a shower. The Pakistani replied that in his village, they have to walk 4-5 kilometres to get water. He said that in Malaysia it is not a problem (field notes, 18 January 2007).

During the second *khurūj*, we had a discussion about how to eat according to the *sunnah*. Here, the *amīr sāf* said to us: "if we eat this meal, please do not eat like *concord*". What he meant was that during our *khurūj* some *karkūn* ate very quickly and did not wait for their fellow *karkūn*. Usually, during mealtimes, a *karkūn* calls to all the participants, including newcomers, to join them. After reciting *bismillah*, we start to eat in small groups around a big plate. The *amīr ta'ām* will fill the plate with fish or omelette. Then, we pick it up without any "feeling". During mealtimes, it is recommended that we finish all the different dishes (*lauk pauk*) accompanying the rice. I felt uncomfortable with this at first, but after a while I enjoyed eating this way during my fieldwork. *Karkūn* said to me that eating this way is part of Islamic brotherhood. Eating together is seen as an important and obligatory part of *khurūj*.

The other ritualised practice that I experienced on the *khurūj* occurs just before sleeping. In general, we went to sleep at 11.00 p.m. but before this a *karkūn* recited some regulations on how to sleep. We were not allowed to sleep with our feet facing west, in the direction of the holy Ka'ba. We slept in a line and some *karkūn* recited the sūrah four *Qul*s:

*Qul yā 'ayyuhā al-kafirūn* (Say: O ye that reject faith) Until the end!
*Qul huwa Allah ahad* (Say: He is Allah the one and Only). Until the end!
*Qul 'a'ūżu bi rabb al-falaq* (Say: I seek refuge with the Lord of the Dawn). Until the end!
*Qul 'a'ūdzubi rab al-nās* (Say: I seek refuge with the Lord and cherish mankind). Until the end!

After that, *karkūn* wipe their whole bodies. I was told that theses *sūrah* would protect us from the devil and from nightmares. It was also recommended that we wake up at midnight to do *shalāt tahajjud*. There were always some *karkūn* who performed this prayer at midnight. I suspect that during the three-day *khurūj*, some *karkūn* use this time to come closer to Allah.

All the rituals and ritualised practices noted above were continuously implemented over the three days of the *khurūj*. On the last day, a final meeting was held before we returned home. During this meeting, there was a *bayān tangguh* delivered by a senior *karkūn* from the *markāz*. I recorded one *bayān tangguh* during my second *khurūj*, as follows:

It is very hard to leave our house to go to a mosque to do *jum'ah* prayer. It is also very hard to leave our house for religion of Allah.

One *karkūn* said: Allah...Allah...Allah...

We must think from now on about going out for the path of Allah. Those who are doing this, Allah will give him His Guidance. Allah will add his *Hidāyah* (Guidance) for us because we will be a "reason" for someone else to go on *khurūj*.

We must think about the Day of Judgment. We want to go on *khurūj* because we think about the powerful Day of Judgment. We must think this from the bottom of our hearts. Ulama have told us that when the Prophet sent out one *jama'ah* on the path of Allah, he would call his *sahabat* to inform them.

Ulama have said that the ummah should go out for three days at least. If they do not want to do *khurūj* that means their faith is bad. Those who are not interested in going out for three days may indicate that their *imān* is weak.

Thus, when we return to our homes, we must think about three days in the next month. The best way is to think starting from tomorrow. If possible, our conversations must be about three days...three days. Please disseminate the message of three days. It might be hard to do forty days of *khurūj*, but this is only for three days. We must direct our thoughts to think of three days from our *ġast* in our *mohalla* for sending a group of *jamā 'ah*. We get the time for going on the path of Allah.

Our first *ġast* is to send out *jamā'ah*. At least we can send out our *jamā'ah* for three days in every month. We need to focus our thinking on this effort because this is a good Sunnah inherited from the Prophet.

Ulama told us the good Sunnah that when the Prophet was dying he convinced a group of Muslims to go on the Path of Allah. He was dead when this *jamā'ah* went on their trip to disseminate *imān*. This is a Sunnah that is followed by the Sahabat. When Abu Bakar was dying, he formed a group of *khurūj fī sabīlillāh* which was headed by Khaled bin Walid.

This is what we want in this life, when a group of *jamā'ah* go on the path of Allah, before they return, we are ready to die to continue the mission. We will get this when we send out a group of *jamā'ah*.

The audience responded: Allah...Allah...Allah...

Therefore, we need to do our thinking...we need to think about our villagers who could go on *khurūj*. How many people in the village would take this responsibility? How many people would be involved in this effort? This is because the job is very important in front of Allah. Usually, a person who studies Islam in a *pondok* has the intention to be closer to Allah. That person must be close to Allah because of his *'ilm*.

Today, we are sent by Allah to implement the religion in our daily life. We also have a responsibility to make our society live according to the religion of Allah. We always hear the words *Kitābullāh* ( the Qur'an) and Sunnah Rasūlullāh. Our Prophet gave us two tasks: religion and the efforts of religion. Indeed by the Qur'an and Sunnah we will not go astray on this earth. This is our responsibility on this earth.

We must fulfil this responsibility. We return to see our wives, as our responsibility. When we see our children this is also our responsibility. Thus, what is the way to make our family live according to our religion? We need to implement our shariah in our family perfectly. We need to revive our *ta'lim* in our houses, to make the implementation of shariah in our families.

The aim of the three-day *khurūj* is to seek how to implement shariah in our lives. The aim of the forty-day *khurūj* is how to implement the shariah in our lives. Today you have gone from your house, so when you come back please make *ta'lim* in your house...This is because in our family there is always the trap from *shaithan*. We also have much *fitnah* (gossip) in our house. Please do *ta'lim* in your family.

Today, we ...*masha Allāh*... have sacrified three days or forty days in every year. There are also some people who share their eight hours in their daily life...there is a *ġast*...All work has been done perfectly. If we could make *ta'lim* in our houses, *insha Allāh* our children will be good morally.

If we make daily *ta'lim* in our family, *insha Allāh* our children will be good...When they go to school we must believe that there will be some wrong attitudes, especially when they mix with other people. When they come back home, we must check and repair their attitudes. We must make sure of what they bring to our families from their time outside. Sometimes these bad things disturb our efforts in this religion. Our efforts are to make good things in our family, but they come back to our house with bad things. So, we must give the Six Points in everyday life. Why are our children like this? This is because we only think about ourselves.

He continued by telling a story of a group from Egypt.

There was a group of *jamā'ah* from Egypt. They told us that there are five things that cannot be neglected, because that would decrease our efforts day by day.

1. We must not let our thinking be about ourselves. We must not forget to interrogate ourselves. The most important things are not beauty or handsomeness, but "how is my religion today?" We are nothing. Where do we come from? We come from sperm which is very dirty. So, we are nothing. The human is only a very dirty sperm. His life only brings dirty things from "in front" and "back".
2. We must take care of our families. People will see our wives. When they want to know who we are, they will look at our families.

3. We must revive the situation around our *mohalla*. A Muslim is a mirror for other Muslims. The best humans in this world are those who are of benefit to other Muslims. Some people told us that if this ummah does not perform this task perfectly, we will be like a snake. A snake stays in an orifice that no-one will approach, because people know that there is a snake in the hole. When the snake moves out of the orifice, people avoid him and run away. Today we must look at ourselves and our efforts toward our religion. How are people around our *mohalla*? We should cry seeking the best effort near our *mohalla*. Today we must seek forgiveness from Allah.
4. We must donate our time to the *markāż*. How is our *karguzari*?
5. We are sent by Allah to go around the world. *Wa mā arsalnāka illā rahmatan lil 'alamīn* (We sent thee not, but as a mercy for all creatures).[12] Our aim is to be sent into the world in order to bring God's mercy. What is God's mercy? God's mercy is the life of the Prophet. If in our self there is no life of the Prophet, what can we bring? The sun has light ... Everyone is happy if the sun rises. But, what would happen if the sun had no light? Humans would be in chaos. If we do religious tasks, we will bring religion into our life (field notes, 27 March 2007).

During this *bayān*, some of us were crying. Some were reciting: Allah...Allah...Allah. The *bayān* was closed by *salāmu'alaykum*. We shook hands and hugged each other. Finally, we left the *surau*. Before departing, we cleaned the *surau* and thanked the local people. We also returned the *ta'ām* set to the *markāż*. Some of us agreed to go on *khurūj* next month. We also exchanged mobile phone numbers to further our friendships.

## Conclusion

As a Muslim, I might find it difficult to write what some would consider a good conclusion to this chapter. When I analyse *khurūj* it is ultimately based on my experiences as a *karkūn*. For some, this will suggest a level of bias that prevents "objective" analysis. However, it should be remembered that not all Muslims identify or agree with the movement of Jamā'ah Tablīgh. In fact, after returning from doing *khurūj* to Kajang, my Muslim housemate teased me about being a *karkūn*. He is opposed to the movement. I got the same reaction when I returned to Cot Anoe and told friends and academics about my research project. Many rejected outright all of my findings on the movement. These responses have also led me to reconsider the story of *ustāż* Jaka and many other similar stories that I have heard; that is, to think about why some staunchly

[12] *Sūrah* al-Anbiyā' (21):107.

anti-Tabligh people become fervent *karkūn* after they have finished *khurūj*. For them, as for me, the experience of *khurūj* may have struck a chord – of authenticity – in their experience of Islam. Yet in arguing this, I hope my conclusions will not be taken as too emotional or radical.

Robert D. Lee, in *Islamic Authencity* (1997), touches on a related issue. He discusses how the problem of authenticity and the self were addressed by four influential Islamic thinkers in the modern Muslim world: Mohammad Iqbal, Sayyid Qutb, 'Ali Shari'ati, and Mohammad Arkoun. Lee analyses the way these thinkers influenced the ummah in terms of an authenticity of Islam. The founder of the Jamā'ah Tablīgh movement also successfully provided rituals during *khurūj*, which influence the ummah in terms of an authenticity of Islam. In my opinion, Mawlana Ilyas established a way to implement an Islamic state on the basis of shariah, but one takes a Sufist approach. This is exemplified through the rituals and ways of conducting *khurūj*. The last *bayān* (*bayān tangguh*) told us how the religious message must be continually spread in our family life and in society around *mohalla* and *halaqah*. *Khurūj* can be seen as providing training for *karkūn* to be good Muslims both within themselves and in their behaviour towards others.

Unlike the Islamic thinkers discussed by Lee, the founder of the Jamā'ah Tablīgh movement did not give the *karkūn* a powerful or explicit ideology. Mohammad Iqbal, for example, was an important Islamic scholar of religious thought, who played a role in establishing the state of Pakistan. Sayyid Qutb was an Islamic activist who influenced the Muslim world in terms of establishing an Islamic ummah (Haddad, 1983). 'Ali Shari'ati was an Iranian sociologist and ideologue of the 1979 Revolution (Abrahamian, 1988), while Mohammad Arkoun is recognised as one of the most influential contemporary Islamic thinkers. I have yet to find a discussion on Islamic scholars that analyses the role of Mawlana Ilyas in such a way. Yet in his role in guiding *karkūn* from all over the world to undertake *da'wa* activities such as *khurūj*, Mawlana Ilyas had undoubtedly performed the role of a Sufist thinker. There is not much written information on such thinkers and for this reason it is hard to situate Mawlana Ilyas as an Islamic academic or thinker. Ali Rahnema (1994), for example, did not include Mawlana Ilyas as an Islamic reformer in his edited book, which covered such pioneers as Sayyid Jamaluddin al-Afghani, Mohammad 'Abduh, Khomeini, Maududi, Hassan al-Banna, Sayyid Qutb, Musa al-Shadr and 'Ali Shari'ati.

Yet despite the limited attention given to Mawlana Ilyas and his movement, what I have learned through my association with the movement and through my direct experience of *khurūj*, has left me deeply

impressed as a Muslim. I would argue that an examination of *khurūj* and other rituals among Jamā'ah Tablīgh demonstrates that Mawlana Ilyas is an Islamic reformer. We should place him along with other Islamic thinkers and reformers who are remembered and honoured for their important roles in organising and mobilising the ummah. The legacy of Mawlana Ilyas, and in particular his method of *khurūj*, provides a good foundation to argue that he, too, be considered a pioneer in the modern Islamic world.

The most interesting issue is how the founder of the movement established the pattern of doing *khurūj*, building on other rituals and practices, such as *mushāwarah*, preparation for *khurūj*, *ijtimā'*, a marathon of *bayān* to convince fellow *karkūn* to go on *khurūj*, as well as other *bayān* discussed in Chapter 6, which contain religious messages. The focal point is how the movement has maintained these rituals for more than eighty years as demonstrated by the ongoing practice of *khurūj*. Some of the orientations that are developed during *khurūj* can also be related to observations by Charles Taylor about the self in the modern era (Taylor, 1989). We can see evidence of what Taylor terms the "hypergood" amongst *karkūn* during *mużākarah*. While this debate among *karkun*, like the experience of Pakistani and Malay *karkun*, was always present, arguably the most conspicuous feature that comes through an examination of *bayān hidāyah* and *bayān tangguh* is the issue of self-control as central to the conduct of *khurūj*. That there are internal Muslim debates over self and identity has been documented by Sokefelf (1999:417-47) in his fieldwork amongst Sunnis and Shi'ahs. This study shows how the ritual of *khurūj* is part of building a wall between their temptations and their submission to Allah. What I mean is that during my *khurūj*, debates and tensions between *karkūn* were always present, in part because the participants in *khurūj* came from different backgrounds. In this situation the role of *amīr sāf* was very important. Although he had no religious charisma, and was only chosen to act in this role for three days, he played an important role in determining the success of the *khurūj*. In this context, senior *karkūn* also played roles as "teachers" even of the *amīr sāf*, but they still obeyed him. The example of the food, discussed above, and the concern that the devil would urinate on it, tells us something about the transfer of knowledge among *karkūn* during *khurūj*. As *karkūn*, we did not ask how it was possible that evil should urinate on the food, but we obeyed the rule without rational thought.

From my observations, *khurūj* provides a pattern for finding the self in human life. My involvement in Jamā'ah Tablīgh leads me to reflect on the *karkūn* 's words: "We must donate our time, our funds and our selves on

the path of Allah". At first I was unsure to what extent we could "donate our selves on the path of Allah". However, when I listened to *bayān tangguh*, the relationship between self, religion, and the path of Allah became clearer. The ritual of *ġast* gave me an illustration of how to do *da'wa* from door to door in our Islamic community. The problem of reducing ego in this ritual is an example of how *karkūn* learn to control the self. Reciting *żikir* during *ġast* also makes clear the connection between the soul of the *karkūn* and God. In this context, when *karkūn* invite local Muslims to the *surau* or mosque this can seen as symbolising the return of a Muslim to *la ilā ha illā allāh*. However, the problem of shyness portrays another picture, as when I did *ġast ta'limi*. Nonetheless, those of strong intellectual and social status can use their abilities to convince Muslims they meet to participate in the activities of the *khurūj*. This shows that *karkūn* who are well educated and have a feeling of well-being and satisfaction with Jamā'ah Tablīgh are able to share this sense of well-being and satisfaction with other Muslims through *khusūsi* or *ġast ta'limī*.

I also observed during my *khurūj* that the religious spirit of well educated people is strong compared with that of ordinary people. During my second *khurūj*, for example, some of the "VIP" *karkūn* were very good orators and gave very articulate *bayān*. A *karkūn* who works at Petronas told me that he is not shy to invite people to the mosque. He wanted to give *bayān* on the second day of *khurūj*, in order to invite more people during *maġrib* prayer. For him, doing *khurūj* is an opportunity to demonstrate his commitment to Islam. A professor at the International Islamic University of Malaysia who was a member of my second *khurūj* in another *bayān* told the audience about the return of an "Islamic hegemony" to the world. Listening to these people and how they sought to convince their audience during *khurūj* was very interesting because during *khurūj*, the audience was made up of ordinary Muslims from the surrounding *surau*, unlike in the *markāż*, where the audience were fellow *karkūn*. From this perspective, we could say that most *bayān* given during *khurūj* were delivered to the "real target" of *da'wa*.

The other thing that struck me during *khurūj* was the response from local people. It seems some Muslims are familiar with the activity of *khurūj* among Jamā'ah Tablīgh. They tend to respect the group. During my *khurūj* and other *khurūj* experiences in Kuala Lumpur and Banda Aceh, the local people were not against the group of *jama'ah*. However, in some places in Banda Aceh, where traditional Islam is strong, the presence of *karkūn* disturbs the activity of the *meunasah* (an Acehnese term for a small prayer hall). A local Muslim in Banda Aceh told me that the coming of *karkūn* to their *meunasah* disturbed the activity of children there (in

Acehnese tradition, a *meunasah* is where the children study Islam, for example, reading the Qur'an and learning *fiqh*). However, during my *khurūj*, *karkūn* were respectful of local activities, such when we decided not to have a program on the second night because it clashed with a scheduled study group. Instead, the *karkūn* joined the study group as audience members, which shows that the existence of *khurūj* and the practice of *da'wa* is not a new activity among Muslims.

The next chapter is an examination of selected life stories of *karkūn* whom I met. Here I show the impact of ritual on the lives of five people after they joined the movement. The aim is to convey something of the personality and orientation of *karkūn* after they conduct *khurūj*. The extent to which our personalities can be changed is arguable, but maybe orientations are more easily changed after a religious experience.

# CHAPTER EIGHT

# LIFE STORIES OF *KARKŪN*

## Introduction

This chapter presents the life stories of five *karkūn* in order to explore the range of backgrounds and motivations of members of Jamā'ah Tablīgh in Cot Goh and Sri Petaling. While in the field, I talked, chatted, joked, prayed and travelled with many *karkūn*. During ritual activities, we were not allowed to talk about worldly problems such as jobs and families. However, during informal conversation I learned much about how and why *karkūn* become involved in the movement, and how being a member of Jamā'ah Tablīgh relates to the rest of their daily lives. Opening my field notes, I find many such discussions. In one case, a *karkūn* said he joined because he hated the movement; another said he only became a member after several years studying about it.

I found that one of the best ways to get to know *karkūn* was to accompany them on *khurūj*. Other *karkūn* I met in coffee shops or mosques. Where possible, I tried to verify the information they gave me. For example, one *karkūn* might say, "I always go on three-day *khuruj* monthly". To check such statements, I would ask about their knowledge of *mawlana* in IPB. Occasionally I asked about the price of tickets or would examine their appearance. Having a brown beard that indicated someone was indeed a senior *karkūn*. Alternatively, I listened to his dialect when he chatted with me, in order to confirm his place of origin.

In this chapter I am concerned to describe the impact of religious experience on the five *karkūn*. Can we say that anyone who seeks a way to find Allah is a fundamentalist and a radical – that is how we can comprehend people who submit themselves to God? This is the thorny question with which I began my research. These life stories are one way of presenting ethnographic data collected not in a single, village-based study, but in a multi-sited ethnographic setting of the kind I set out to observe. As elaborated in previous chapters, my study aims to bring us closer to the more private experiences of Tablighists. This chapter similarly aims to

answer questions about the nature of "religious experience" among Tablighists.

The five *karkūn* presented here had different backgrounds and joined Jamā'ah Tablīgh for different reasons. Their involvement and identification with the movement was also varied. The first was a teacher (forty-eight years old) in a junior high school in Banda Aceh. The second was a Javanese *karkūn* (fifty years old) who worked as a labourer in Kuantan on the east coast of peninsular Malaysia. The third was an ex-gangster from Medan (thirty-two years old), originally from north Aceh, who worked as a security guard for a foreign NGO in Banda Aceh. The fourth was an Acehnese (thirty-seven years old) who was a student at a university in Malaysia. The fifth was a Malaysian university student (twenty-six years old) from Johor, who lived with his family in Selangor, where he was also a *ta'mir* (or guard) at a *surau.*[1]

## Experiences of the miraculous: the case of Apa Itanya

During the bus trip to Pekan Baru on July 2007, one *karkūn* chatted with me for most of the way. I have given him the pseudonym Apa Itanya, which means "Uncle who is questioned". *Apa* means uncle in Achenese and *itanya* is an Achenese nickname meaning "who is questioned". Apa Itanya did not tell me his full name but rather introduced himself using his nickname (as is common in Aceh). He is an English teacher in a junior high school in Banda Aceh, and has a wife and two sons.

Apa Itanya sat behind me and kept telling me about his miraculous experiences after joining Jamā'ah Tablīgh. Sometimes I found it hard to believe what he was telling me, because in Islam this kind of religious experience is not usually shared with ordinary people. Rather, people with special powers keep such experiences to themselves, out of humility and reverence. Yet Apa Itanya told me that he had known about the coming of the tsunami to Aceh. He said that if anyone were to harm him during his *da'wa*, then they would face serious problems in their life. For example, during his *khurūj* in a village in Aceh Besar, many locals asked him to leave the mosque because they did not like Jamā'ah Tablīgh. One villager even beat him up. Apa Itanya said that he did not take revenge, but instead prayed to Allah to give His Guidance to this man. Then, suddenly the man was crushed by a motorcycle in front of the mosque. He also told me that everything he wanted would be granted by Allah through his *shalāt*

[1] All names are pseudonyms and some potentially identifying features have been altered in order to protect the anonymity of my informants.

*sunnat*. He said that when villagers needed rain for their paddy, they should just pray to Allah and the rain will come. He concluded that *shalāt sunnah* is very important in our daily lives. He also told me about his dreams of the Prophet Muhammad. During our trip, we passed the mountain of Seulawah, where he said he saw not the forest but only water.

Apa Itanya had a long beard and his skin was quite dark. His teeth were very clean. During our trip, he was very kind to others. Those who met him always hugged him warmly and he seemed very popular among *karkūn*. They had many conversations with him about how to do *da'wa* in Aceh.

At first, I said that I did not want to listen to his experiences as I did not believe in such things. He looked as though he understood why I really did not want to hear about his religious experiences. He replied, "this story is only for you, not for anyone else". I asked why he wanted to tell this story to me and he answered, "I do not have a reason, but Allah through His will has given me the opportunity to sit behind you and tell you this story". In this, he reminded me of other *karkūn* who would argue that meetings between humans are always arranged by Allah. I replied: "Look, I do not want to listen to your story, not because I do not believe you, but because I do not think [ordinary] people can understand your experience". I asked him to change the topic, because it was beyond my capacity to understand.

Then we started talking about family. He asked where I live. "I live in Cot Anoe village and am married into one of the *dayah* (traditional Islamic school in Aceh) families", I answered. When I mentioned Cot Anoe village, he tried to tell me that one of the great ulama in this village was in fact a member of my wife's family. He said that he had met the ulama, before his death in November 2006. (Indeed, my mother-in-law is related to the wife of this ulama so I knew the story of his death). Apa Itanya informed me that he knew beforehand that the ulama would die, just as he knew about the coming of the tsunami.

Apa Itanya had been a member of Jamā'ah Tablīgh for five years. Before joining, he researched the organisation for several years. He did not tell me what kind of research it was but it seemed to me that his research was on whether Jamā'ah Tablīgh was deviant or not. At the time he was an undergraduate student at a university in Banda Aceh. After conducting his own research on Jamā'ah Tablīgh, he came to conclusion that the movement does not practice deviant teaching.

The circumstances surrounding his first *khurūj* were interesting. He said that his wife disagreed with his decision to join Jamā'ah Tablīgh and would not prepare his clothes for this three-day *khurūj*. Consequently he

left home with only one set of clothing. During his *khurūj* he washed his clothes in the bathroom and then had to sit there and wait for them to dry. He remembered his first experience of *khurūj* as a trial – a trial sent to him to demonstrate his commitment to joining Jamā'ah Tablīgh in the face of his wife's disapproval. For this was a trial sent to him and not a big conflict in his family.

Apa Itanya said that many of his fellow school teachers did not like him. This was not only because he is a *karkūn*, but also because he asks his students to perform *shalāt dhuhur* (noon prayer) at school. According to the other teachers, his attitude disrupts the classroom schedule. Usually, schools in Aceh have a special place for prayer, but his school had no place for praying. However Apa Itanya said that it was more important not to go against the schedule of Allah. He did not ask the teachers to do *shalāt*, but only his own students. When the time comes for the prayers, he and his student go to the bathroom to perform *wudhu'* (ritual ablutions before prayers), then they go to a big tree outside the class room and pray beneath it. They bring newspapers to be used as prayer mats. He said that his initiative was not successful at the beginning, but after a few days many students went out when they heard the *ażan* (call to prayer). The other teachers could not do anything, because the *shalāt* takes only fifteen minutes, after which the students return to class.

Apa Itanya said that the head of school did not like him for this reason and had refused his promotion, though without giving a reason. Apa Itanya knew this, but did not oppose the head or anyone else in the school. He said that they could stop his promotion, but that this depends on the will of Allah. If Allah wants to cancel something, man cannot stop it. He said that one teacher who always gave him difficulties at school had a stroke, while other teachers who had shown a bad attitude to him had become sick. During our trip to Pekan Baru, he seemed to want to show how the man who devotes himself to Allah need not feel guilty in front of other people.

When he was trying to tell me about certain miraculous things, I looked in his eyes and said:

> Pak Apa Itanya, the experience is for you, not for me. Please do not tell this to others, because ordinary Muslims sometimes do not understand this level of religious experience. In fact, I am not really happy to listen to this. From what you are telling me I can see that you have already reached the level of *orang saleh* ("pious Muslim"). So, don't tell anybody about this!

I realised that my words were a little impolite, even rude. I felt I had to say this not because I did not like him, but because many ordinary Muslims would believe him to have *karāmat* (blessing). I told him that

such miraculous experiences belong to people blessed by Allah. He understood and said that those stories were never shared with other Muslims. Our conversation continued. When our bus drove into Medan at midnight, he took *shalāt tahajjud* in the car park. I saw from the bus that this man was very pious. He bought oranges for me when we had dinner in east Aceh. I was very sleepy but he kept telling me about his religious experiences. I was thinking that this was really a "passive in-depth interview". However, he was very kind and tended to understand my words. But he could not stop talking about his unique experiences. He finally said that maybe Allah was commanding him to share his experiences with me.

Sitting behind, he suddenly said that I had been living in Thailand. I asked him how he knew this and he replied that someone had told him. When I asked who, he would not tell me the name. He only said it was unusual that he knew I had lived in Thailand and that the most important thing was that Allah arranged our meeting in the bus.

Regarding his meeting with the Prophet Muhammad in his dream, I asked him, "what did the Prophet do in your dream?" Apa Itanya replied: "He just smiled at me and said peace upon you". I asked further: "But how do you know that the man in your dreams was the Prophet?" Apa Itanya said: "I knew this man was the Prophet and that *jins* (devils) cannot draw the face of the Prophet in our dreams". "How many people know of this dream?" I asked. He replied: "No one, except you!"

The mystical stories of Apa Itanya led me to think about other Muslims who are able to see the "unseen" through dreams. His story about the tsunami, the death of those who beat him up, the rainfall on his *sawah* (rice field) following prayer and other miracles may well have been true. But I was disturbed by these stories, as such truths can be only understood by Muslims who have reached an advanced level of religious consciousness or awareness, such as those referred to as *saleh* (pious) or as *aulia* (sing. *wali*) *Allāh* (friends of Allah).

Apa Itanya had never travelled to IPB, instead performing the forty-day *khurūj* in Aceh. He had an intention to visit IPB one day as part of his involvement in the movement. He said he was committed to the movement and that after joining never forgot to live in accord with the Six Points. He said that he lives in this world with a "nothing to lose" attitude. His wife, who at first disagreed with his decision, later came to understand the movement and why her husband wanted to devote himself to it as part of being a devout Muslim. One day, Apa Itanya said, a group of *khurūj* came to his village. Many members of the group were Pakistanis with long beards. Some of them had brown beards. He said to his wife: "You see,

they have long brown beards. I have only a very short beard". His wife said: "Ok, from now on you may have a long beard [meaning, commit himself to Jamā'ah Tablīgh]".

I asked him whether he wanted to go on *khurūj* after the *ijtimā'*. He did not answer, saying instead that he wanted to join the *khidmat* section in the *ijtimā'*. When we arrived at the place of the *ijtimā'*, I lost sight of him. The next day I saw him again in the kitchen serving *khidmat*. He smiled at me. The next time I saw him was at a mosque in Pidie where he was doing *khurūj*. At the time, I was catching a bus from northern Aceh to Banda Aceh. When the bus stopped at a mosque where he was conducting *khurūj* to perform *shalāt shubuh,* I did not approach him or chat with him, because I stopped only to pray.

The case of Apa Itanya is in some senses unique, though not within Sufist traditions. His compulsive talking about his religious experiences seemed to be part of that attitude known in Sufism as *syathīhat*. This is the relating of miraculous experiences (sometimes referred to as *karāmat*) to other people. In Aceh, according to another informant, these people have been blessed by Allah and have a close relationship to Him. From my discussions with other Acehnese friends, I have concluded that four types of people have such religious experiences. The first are those who cannot stop talking about their experiences, their knowledge and their prophecies to others. The second group do not want to talk with other people, choosing to stay at home "only eating *kalīmah*", which means only performing *żikir* every day. The third are *karāmat* people, who are called *aulia Allāh* in Acehnese. Such religious people can be in two places at once and perform other miraculous feats. The fourth are those who act silently and become great masters of *tarekat* (Sufism). I have met some of these kinds of religious men. One of their characteristics is that they can understand others through *firāsat* (palmistry). Thus, through my discussions with several Acehnese, I came to understand Apa Itanya better.

After a year, I met him again at an Islamic boarding school in Banda Aceh. He hugged me warmly. I told him: "What you could do to stop talking about your religious experience is to practice *żikir* constantly". He agreed and gave me his mobile phone number. After several days, he called me to ask how he could control his constant talk about his religious experiences. I said that I did not know, because that had to do with his relationship with Allah. I told him that I had met several people like him and that he should not become angry, because when he is angry, it has a catastrophic impact on others. Since then he has continued to phone me,

because he says that I am the only one who understands what is unique about his religious experiences.

It seems to me that Apa Itanya received his blessing from Allah without the mediation of a teacher or grand master. In Islam, it is generally believed that in order to learn about mysticism one must have a teacher. Given that Apa Itanya had no human teacher, one possibility is that his teacher was the Prophet Khidr. Henry Corbin says of the Prophet Khidr:

> For a complete answer to the question *Who Is Khidr?* we should have to compile a very considerable mass of material from very divergent sources: prophetology, folklore, alchemy, etc.; but we here consider him essentially as the invisible spiritual master, reserved for those who are called to a direct unmediated relationship with the divine world – that is, a bond seeking no historical justification in a historical succession of *sheikhs* – for those owe their investiture to no authority, we can confine ourselves to certain essential points: his appearance in the Koran, the meaning of his name, his connection with the Prophet Elijah, and it turn the connection between Elijah and the Imām of Shī ism (Corbin, 1969: 55).[2]

I finally asked Apa Itanya during a telephone conversation about the Prophet Khidr. He answered that the Prophet comes to him in his dreams. And that he only smiles.

When I took a trip to northern Aceh, I met an old friend who, like Apa Itanya, always talks about his miraculous experiences. We also had a debate about the existence of the Prophet Khidr. Our debate was over whether the Prophet Khidr appeared to people who are shari'ah-minded or to people who think about gnosis. I told him about Apa Itanya's experiences. A friend of mine who is a member of a theological forum in north Aceh, told me about the possibility of the presence of Prophet Khidr. He said that the Prophet Khidr is for those who seek the path to meet Allah without a teacher or great master. For a mysterious Prophet like Khidr, Corbin maintains:

> He is represented as Moses' guide, who initiates Moses "into the science of predestination". Thus he reveals himself to be the repository of an inspired divine science, superior to the law (*sharī'ah*); thus Khidr is superior to Moses in so far as Moses is a prophet invested with the mission of revealing a *sharī'a*. He reveals to Moses precisely the secret, mystic truth ... that transcends the *sharī'a*, and this explains why the spirituality inaugurated by Khidr is free from the servitude of the literal religion (Corbin, 1969: 55).

---

[2] See also Schimmel (1975:105-106); Bruinessen (1998).

From my meeting Apa Ipanya, I have come to the conclusion that a religious man who has "met" Allah may express this in two ways. The first is through sharing his experience with others and this may be due to the fact that he has no teacher. The second way is to say nothing about these religious experiences to others, because this is prohibited by their teacher. I urged Apa Itanya to seek a teacher or do *żikir* in his daily life (as a way of controlling this urge to use his *karāmat* and to talk about it). However, to find a teacher, he must first become part of a *tarekat*.

My experience of meeting people like Apa Itanya in Aceh suggests that in Islam, there is a group of people who have supernatural powers. This can be transferred or inherited from a family member. It can also be achieved through great ritual practice and devotion. The question is what kind of ritual leads some people to receive the power of *fīrāsat* (palmistry) and other blessings. From what I observed in the case of Apa Itanya, Jamā'ah Tablīgh had nothing to do with this. Apa Itanya had never been to IPB and was not involved in its organisational structure. However, the importance of Jamā'ah Tablīgh to Apa Itanya was that it provided him with an arena in which to meet his God. Even without any direct guidance from the highest spiritual leaders in the movement, like *mawlana* in IPB or Sri Petaling, Jamā'ah Tablīgh also provided him with a warm and safe environment away from the censoring eyes of his fellow school teachers and principal. The opportunity to have contact with fellow Tablighists, whether at the mosque, on *khurūj* or at the *ijtimā'*, enabled him to interact with "brothers" who can appreciate his religious experiences (even if not fully understand them) and support his desire to live as a pious Muslim.

## The bonds of Islamic brotherhood: the case of Pak De Paijo

The mosque in Sri Petaling is opposite a hotel. Pak De Paijo once said, "this hotel", gesturing towards the mosque, "is for the Day of Judgment (*hari qiyāmat*), and that hotel is for the worldly". Pak De Paijo is fifty years old. He is from Kediri in East Java. We had a four-hour "friendship" in Sri Petaling one day, after I met him in one of the *karkūn* coffee houses outside the main gate of the mosque. There were four *karkūn* there when I approached the café saying "*assalāmu'alaykum*". They replied "*wa'alaykum salām*". I ordered *teh tarek* (milk tea). They were looking at me. I was very nervous because I did not know how to start the conversation.

Earlier that day I had been walking around the city of Sri Petaling looking to buy an envelope and eating breakfast in one of the Indian restaurants in the area. The city seemed to be dominated by Chinese

traders but there were also a few Indian restaurants on street corners. I had seen some *karkūn* when I bought an envelope. They were in the shop buying noodles, oil, eggs and ketchup. I suspected that they were preparing to go on *khurūj*. I just smiled at them. I was not wearing gameez. I recognised one of these *karkūn;* he seemed to be the owner of the café. When I approached, they smiled again. After I enjoyed the *teh tarek* I smoked *Dji Sam Su*. I was sure the *karkūn* did not like me, because I was smoking. But one of them asked, "*awak daripade mane*" (where do you come from)? I answered, "from Aceh!" From his dialect, I guessed he was from Indonesia. I asked him: "*Panjenengan sang geng Jowo*" (Do you come from Java)? He answered: "*Kulo sang geng Kediri*" (I come from Kediri).

We then talked in a Malay-Javanese dialect. He introduced himself as Pak De Paijo (a pseudonym). I said my name was Kamal. The other *karkūn* were looking at me and then began to ask many questions about the tsunami, the conflict in Aceh and Islamic issues there, as happened again and again during my fieldwork whenever I mentioned that I came from Aceh. I told them about the tsunami, how many of my family died in the tidal waves in north Aceh and Banda Aceh, and what we ate during the first three days of the tsunami when there was no food. I said that I did not know very much about the conflict, because during the conflict in Aceh I was in Yogyakarta doing my first degree and in Kuala Lumpur studying for a master's degree. The conversation then moved to my job as a lecturer in Thailand and my opinion of the conflict in southern Thailand.[3] One Malay *karkūn* introduced himself and said he was from Kelantan. Speaking in Kelantanese, he asked me "*kat thai dok kat ne*" (In Thailand, where did you live)? I said: "*kat Nakhon, tapi pi Tani jale-jale je*" (in Nakhon; I only go to Pattani for travelling as tourist). I avoided giving my opinion on the conflict in southern Thailand because we had only just met.

Pak De Paijo told me that he has family in Yogyakarta in Wonosari. I replied that I had been there. We talked about other things, such as the earthquakes in Aceh and Yogyakarta and while we were chatting, a *karkūn* sitting at the next table wanted to join our conversation. He was Bangladeshi. He said that he had been in Malaysia for eleven years.

Given this warm welcome, Pak De started to tell me something of his history. He told me that he had been in Malaysia for six years where he had worked as a labourer in many factories. He travelled to Malaysia in

[3] On the conflict in Southern Thailand, see Serajul Islam (2005:79-97, 1998: 441-456); Yusuf and Schmidt (2006); Dulyaksem and Sirichai (2005); Sugunnasil (2006:119-144).

2000, when Indonesia was facing a series of economic and political crises. He has a family in Kediri, where he was an *ustāż* in a madrasah. He currently lives in Kuantan, on the east coast of peninsular Malaysia. After we finished coffee, I walked with him to the mosque to do *shalāt dhuhur*. He said he had just come from Kuantan, where he worked as a labourer in the morning, and at night along with his sister-in-law he taught children, in a traditional madrasah, to read the Qur'an. He said he worked as an *ustāż* in this madrassah on a voluntary basis and that in return the villagers had offered him free accommodation.

Pak De joined Jamā'ah Tablīgh when he was living in Perak (a state in Malaysia) as an illegal worker. At that time he tried to avoid all contact with Malaysian authorities as he did not have proper documents to work in the country. After performing *shalāt* in *surau*, he said, he would go quickly back to where he was living in order to avoid suspicion.[4] However, one day a policeman approached him in the *surau* saying: "Do you want to come with us for three days?" Pak De thought they wanted to question him and confessed: "I don't have a work permit or a valid passport". The policeman answered, "I'm not looking for your documents, but asking you to go on *khurūj* for three days". He added, "this earth belongs to Allah; we don't have the right to make borders by asking for passports or work permits. All Muslims are linked by brotherhood. We go to the same mosque and worship the same God. Why should I ask you for a work permit?" Given this answer, Pak De said he was interested in going on *khurūj*. He joined Jamā'ah Tablīgh and shortly afterwards went back to Java. He returned to Malaysia once he had a passport and a work permit. At the time we met, he was in his third year as a legal worker in Malaysia.

Pak De explained that he was only in Kuala Lumpur for two days, in order to extend his work permit. He said that when he had things to do in Kuala Lumpur, he always stayed in the mosque in Sri Petaling. For him, sleeping in the mosque was cheaper than a hotel, because this is "Allah's hotel". We then went to his place in the sleeping hall.

When I asked about his experiences of the *markāż*, he told me that he performed *khidmat* in the kitchen for ten days:

---

[4] Many 'Indons' (a derogatory term for Indonesians) face harassment and immigration problems in Malaysia. The Malaysian immigration officials and police keep an eye out for Indonesians who may be illegal workers. At times, there have been reports that illegal workers have been beaten by the police and their employers. Nevertheless many Indonesians, especially Acehnese, are greeted warmly by Malays who are sympathetic to the conflicts and natural disasters in their homeland.

> Doing *khidmat* in the kitchen is very tiring because we cook for many people. After *shalāt shubuh*, we have a meeting to decide what we will cook that morning. In this meeting we also distribute jobs. After breakfast, we clean the kitchen and after that rest for a while. The next job is to prepare lunch, with a meeting beforehand. This is the same for dinner.

I asked: "Do you know where rice comes from?" He answered: "I don't know, everyday I saw that the kitchen was full of food". I asked if he knew who supplied it. He said: "No, I don't know. But the same thing happens at the international *markāż*. The food supply is never discussed in the meetings. I think it is from Allah". "What do you think about preparing food three times a day for more 300 *karkūn*?" I responded that *karkūn* have to pay RM 6.00 per *ta'ām*, to which he replied: "Yes, but guests, *shūra*, *khidmat*, elder *karkūn* and student mostly eat for free". "Okay", I said, "I think you are right. The food supply might be because of Allah".

After *shalāt dhuhur*, I went out of the mosque to enjoy a smoke and take some photographs. I did not want to bother Pak De, because he told me that after the prayer, he would go to the immigration office in Kuala Lumpur. But he came up to me outside and asked me to have lunch at a "*warung Jawa*" (Javanese restaurant). On the way, I noticed that we were walking through a residential area of mostly Chinese households. I asked if the restaurant was owned by Chinese. He said: "No, this is only a Chinese area. In between their houses there are some owned by *karkūn*". He then pointed out some of these houses. Finally we stopped outside a house and he said with a smile, "this is *warung Jawa*".

The house was owned by a Bangladeshi *karkūn* in his mid-thirties, who had married a forty-year old Javanese woman, who was a relative of his sister-in-law. This *karkūn* had brought his younger brother with him to help run the two restaurants that he had opened. Inside the house were the couple, the brother and Pak De's sister-in-law. She had come with Pak De from Pahang because she was out of work and wanted to find a job in Kuala Lumpur. Pak De explained that he stayed with the family because women were not allowed to sleep in the mosque. The first things I saw in the house were a sack of rice and some kitchen equipment. There was no sofa or any other living room furniture and no electronic devices. The atmosphere in the house combined three cultures: Malay, Bangladeshi and Javanese. The Bangla spoke with his brother in their own language, while Pak De spoke with his sister-in-law and his wife in Javanese. When there was a conversation between Bangladeshis and Indonesians, they used Malay.

We ate lunch together and there was some discussion of the effort involved in opening the second restaurant nearby, in Sri Petaling. The

meal was fish curry and rice. As their guest, I was served first. Pak De said, "you are our guest today". I smiled, saying "*matur nuwun sanget* (thank you very much)". Over lunch, the husband told me about his *khurūj* in Bangladesh. He said that he does not go on *khurūj* at the moment as he is fully occupied with running his business in Kuala Lumpur. For him, Kuala Lumpur is a place to earn money. They did not have children, but his wife had three in Purwokerto from her first husband. I did not want to ask about family issues, but Pak De informed me that his wife had divorced her first husband before leaving for Kuala Lumpur. After lunch, Pak De wanted to go to the immigration office. I offered to accompany him to the city, which is where I left him.

I could not decide whether Pak De and this family really belonged to Jama'ah Tabligh or whether they just use it to help them with their struggles in Malaysia. When Pak De stays in Kuala Lumpur, he uses the Jamā'ah Tablīgh facilities. The husband opened his restaurant on the way to the main gate of the *markāż*. His wife, who is a traditional Javanese woman, did not wear the hijab, neither did Pak De's sister-in-law, indicating that these women were not *mastūrāt* (women Tablighists). In Kuantan, Pak De lived in the house of a villager, as did his sister-in-law, who also volunteered her time teaching the Qur'an. He had joined Jamā'ah Tablīgh through the police, who then gave him a place to work in Perak. A villager offered the house in Kuantan in recognition of his services to Islamic education in the village.[5] He sent most of his money back to his family in Java and expressed no intention to go on *khurūj* to IPB (preferring to send the money to his family). Someone helped him to get a visa in Kuala Lumpur. During our time outside the mosque and over lunch, the conversations were not about Jamā'ah Tablīgh. This made me think that the importance of Jamā'ah Tablīgh in Pak De's life was that it assisted him financially and socially, and to a lesser extent spiritually, in Malaysia. This meant that he was not alone in Malaysia but through Jamā'ah Tablīgh drew on the bonds of Muslim brotherhood to ease his difficulties as an outsider.

The case of Pak De tells us something about the relation between religion, nationality and capitalism. It is well known in Malaysia that there are many legal and illegal workers from Indonesia and IPB countries. It is also widely known that many of Malaysia's Indonesian workers visit Malaysia on social visit visas and stay on illegally. For this reason, illegal

[5] When I was doing my graduate studies in Malaysia, some of my fellow Acehnese students also worked as private *ustāż* where they were paid a monthly fee of between RM 200-300.

workers live in fear of being discovered and deported. They also fear police harassment for not having the proper documents. This is what made Pak De's relationship with the police in Perak so uncommon. His experience here demonstrates how the religious spirit of members of Jamā'ah Tablīgh influences their behaviour towards other Muslims, including illegal workers. The invitation by the police to join the movement overrode their concern that Pak De was illegally staying in Malaysia. A notion of Islamic brotherhood and cosmopolitanism came to the fore – something that Pak De reworked in his claim that "this earth belongs to Allah". In terms of this concept, there can be no national or jurisdictional border between Muslims.[6] Of course, his treatment by the police might have been different had Pak De not accepted the invitation to join their *khurūj* and he may have been acting instrumentally for this reason.

As a "brother" Muslim and member of Jamā'ah Tablīgh, Pak De's stay in Perak had been safe-guarded. The response of villagers in Kuantan also indicates the influence of a similar logic, although Jamā'ah Tablīgh did not play an important role here. His comparison between a mosque and a hotel was in some sense a metaphor for his life. At one level, there is a spiritual dimension here, in that when Muslims are close to their mosque, they will not have any problems on this earth. The mosque is then a symbol of worshipping Allah. On another level, however, this relationship is much more practical and may have less to do with the spirit of Jamā'ah Tablīgh than its practical advantage for migrants in Malaysia.

## Returning to Allah: the case of Bang Ibrahim

At the end of November 2006, I visited Cot Goh in Aceh to do fieldwork. I was looking to meet *karkūn* and generally met them while smoking or reading a newspaper in coffee shop. Sometimes the villagers approached me, asking who I was or what my business in Cot Goh was. During one meeting, a *karkūn* told me that there were a few Acehnese *karkūn* studying at a *pondok* in a province in southern Thailand. They told me that Cot Goh had become a transit place for young *karkūn* who had just

[6] This experience is similar to a situation faced by one of my relatives in Perak, where he is the local *'ulamā'*. Originally from Aceh, he married a woman from northern Malaysia, where he works as an Islamic missionary in Perak, Kedah and Penang. Many of his audience and students are government officers, including some police. He told me that if he ever had a summons, the police would say 'no problem Ustāż!', once again drawing on a feeling of Islamic brotherhood in a borderless society.

returned from Thailand. One of this group was *Ustāż* Jubali, a Qur'an teacher in Cot Goh. Many *karkūn* asked me about the situation in the south of Thailand, just as they had in Sri Petaling. I said to them that I lived about 400 km away from the provinces (Yala, Narathiwat and Pattani), so did not know much about conflict. They said due to the conflict many Acehnese *karkūn* could not study at *pondok* in Thailand.

During our conversation, a *karkūn* approached me and asked if I were from north Aceh. I told him I was. We introduced ourselves further and discovered that we came from eastern and western north Aceh respectively. His name was Ibrahim, and I called him Bang Ibrahim (in Acehnese *bang* means brother).

After this conversation, we became friends. Bang Ibrahim had a very long beard. Ulama with long beards are often seen as charismatic, which means that people tend to approach them, and not the other way around. I told him I was doing research on Jamā'ah Tablīgh. He asked "what about?" I said that I was concerned that there was no book on Jamā'ah Tablīgh in Indonesia which discusses the experiences of *karkūn*. He asked my full name and said that he knew me through the articles I have written for the daily *Serambi Indonesia*. He commented that he liked my ideas and asked: "What do you want to know about me?" I said I was keen to know about his experiences of becoming a *karkūn*. He then asked: "Are you a *karkūn*?" I said no, to which he replied, "Ok, it doesn't matter, this *da'wa* is only for selected people. You will be selected by Allah if you follow this *jamā'ah*". Then we went to the mosque to sit closer to each other.

Bang Ibrahim is very concerned about his *imān* (faith). He is satisfied with this path but is very afraid that his *imān* will leave him. He started to learn about Islam when he was twenty-eight years old. He said that he began to study the Qur'an after he joined Jamā'ah Tablīgh when he was staying in Kuala Samping, on the border between north Sumatra and Aceh. He has been on *khurūj* in Cot Saka in north Aceh. He comes from a village in Nasim District. Many of his fellow villagers opposed his mission. However, when he was a child, he moved to the city of Medan where he became a "*preman*" (gangster or street hoodlum).[7] His job was to ask for "security money" from local businessmen. When he was twenty years old, he married a sixteen-year-old woman. They had a child and later divorced. Then, he got married again, to a primary school teacher, when he moved to Cot Goh.

Bang Ibrahim works at whatever job that are *halal* (allowable by religion). After he earns enough money, he stops working. Then, he stays

[7] For more on the role of *preman* in Indonesia, see Colombijn and Lindblad (2002).

in the mosque to study Islam. In this mosque there were a few *karkūn* who were studying Islam. They learn how to read the Qur'an, *hadīts*, *fiqh*, Arabic and *ushūl al-fiqh*. I met him several times in the mosque. However, upon returning from Malaysia, when I asked about Bang Ibrahim, a *karkūn* told to me that he was working as a security guard at night at an international NGO in Banda Aceh, and so could not stay at the mosque. I remember that he often told me: "I do not want to be outside of the mosque, because I am afraid of losing my *imān* (faith)". That is why, after he earned some money, he always went back to stay in the mosque. He said that he had already talked about this situation with his wife. It seems that she understood his problem. His wife was a *mastūrāt*. Thus, it was easy to make her understand. One of his reasons for spending time in the mosque was because of his bad history during his time in Medan. He would not go back to that job anymore.

At the end of June 2007 I met him again in the mosque. He smiled and shook hands with me. I said that I had done *khurūj* in Malaysia. He was very happy. Then, we had a good interview about his preparations to go to the *ijtimā'* in Pekan Baru. He told me that he was at the *ijtimā'* in 2006 and that we needed to go on *ijtimā'*, because that way we could hear *bayān* from the mawlana of IPB. He said he wanted to go on *khurūj* to IPB, but that was still an intention (*niyyat*). Going on *ijtimā'* would give him the spirit to do more in the movement. He seemed to understand well the situation of *ijtimā'*. His preparation for this trip involved simply getting a ticket, however, he would not go by bus, but would join one of the caravans of *karkūn* in Banda Aceh. He asked for permission from his boss to go. In fact, during my time in Pekan Baru, I did not see him at the *ijtimā'*. I suspect that he had problems with money or permission from his office.

During my fieldwork I met several *karkūn* who felt "reborn" after joining the movement. Most said that they had been gamblers, gangsters or opposed to Jamā'ah Tablīgh, but then found that the movement provided the spiritual guidance for them to return to Allah. Like Bang Ibrahim, they had stories to tell of their sinful pasts, followed by changed lives after their return to Allah. Several also said they wanted to stay close to the mosque because they were afraid of losing their faith. One *karkūn* told me about his reaction to Jamā'ah Tablīgh before he joined, in the following way: "I did not like this movement, but after I entered and followed the rituals and [after] being away for four months in IPB, I will never quit Jamā'ah Tablīgh".

For Bang Ibrahim, his former bad life was in part caused by his lack of knowledge about Islam. His acknowledgement that he only began to study

the Qur'an at twenty-eight years of age indicates that it was only after he joined Jamā'ah Tablīgh that he came to know the Qur'an. At this point, he also changed his lifestyle by marrying a village girl in Cot Goh and devoted himself to a spiritual journey to the extent that he only worked intermittently in order to earn some money, before returning to the mosque to study Islam. He said that his wife does not complain because, according to him, we only need to work on this earth sufficient to meet our basic needs. The real work of our lives should be on our spiritual needs, as these are more important than others. His experiences in Medan provided him with an illustration of what can go wrong when he forgets this truth and sins against Allah.

In this situation, Bang Ibrahim saw that Jamā'ah Tablīgh had brought him back to Allah. He understood the movement to be very powerful in terms of his spiritual journey, and his participation in *ijtimā'* in Pekan Baru and his intention to go on *khurūj* in IPB showed that he saw the orientation and activities of the movement to be in the right direction. But, his spiritual growth was not without financial cost. This may also be a reason why in many interviews, *karkūn* tended not to speak about their families and private lives. For many, such financial considerations may have affected their private life and personal desires, such as to marry, build a family and have a job that earns enough for the family. In one interview, a thirty-two-year old *karkūn* did not want to speak about his private life as he was unable to support himself and still relied on funds from his family in Sulawesi.

## Jamā'ah Tablīgh is about Islam: the case of Bang Rahman

"If you want to write about *Tabligh*, do not write about *da'wa*, but write about Islam". This was first thing that I heard from Bang Rahman whom I met on 9 February 2007. "You must convince your readers that Jamā'ah Tablīgh is not about doing *da'wa*, but is about Islam". I simply said: "Yes and I agree with you". My interview with him was well planned, because he was a former MA student in a university in Kuala Lumpur. Before I met him, I contacted an old friend with whom I had lived when I was MA student at the University of Malaya. My friend, now a lecturer in Banda Aceh, sent me a text message giving me the mobile phone number of Bang Rahman. I sent a message asking if he had time to tell me of his experiences as a *karkūn*. I had met him five years ago in many informal meetings, when he was already a *karkūn*, but at that time I was not interested in hearing about his religious experiences.

He suggested that I come to his house in Kampong Keramat. Kampong Keramat is well known as the residence of many *Indons* working as labourers, illegal workers, students, etc. It was Friday, so I needed to wear good clothes for *jum'ah* prayer, but decided against gameez. I took the train and when I arrived at the station, I called him. He told me that I needed to go along the street one hundred metres, and then up to the third floor of an old *pangsapuri* (apartment). This confused me, because I was already facing the *pangsapuri*. He told me to look up to third floor. I saw a man with cell phone to his ear. I smiled. I had not met him in five years.

I walked to the stairs and he welcomed me at the first floor. We hugged each other. He said: "*Alhamdulillāh*", finally Allah gives His will for us to meet again. Our conversation was in Acehnese. Our meeting was like a reunion.[8] We sat in the living room, where there was only a small table and the book *Fadhā'il Amal* on it, together with a mattress and a pillow. There was no television or any other electronic device. He did not introduce me to his wife but told me that she is a Medan-Malay. They have two children and were married in 2002. Most of his family live in Medan, so he is somewhat familiar with Medan city, especially from running his business.

After he mentioned my research he said:

> I have a friend who has just returned from his *khurūj* in Canada. He reported on the development of Islam there. We cannot talk about Islam with Muslims or non-Muslims, because they have also forgotten their own religion. There is a decadence amongst humans, especially amongst those who have moved far away from religion. In fact, there are followers of religion who do not like their religion very much. There is nobody in mosques, churches or other places of worship. But after my friend shared an overview of Islam, they [in Canada] came to understand what Islam is. Until then, what they knew about Islam was only about Muslim terrorists.

He saw my conversation with him as a means of changing my research topic from *da'wa* to Islamic issues. So I asked him what kind of issues I should cover in my book. Before answering, he said he was very happy to hear that an Acehnese like me was writing about the movement. I was recording our conversation, so did not ask many questions, preferring to allow him to talk about himself and his involvement in the movement without too much prompting.

He became a *karkūn* in 1994, he said, when he was completing a diploma in north Aceh. Then he moved to Medan to pursue a degree at a

---

[8] Most Acehnese in Kuala Lumpur do not use the national language, Indonesian, when speaking with other Acehnese.

state university. Since becoming a member of Jamā'ah Tablīgh, he had done *khurūj* for four months in IPB as well as forty days of *khurūj* on foot in Lombok. He told me: "I want to die on this path". He was well informed about developments within Jamā'ah Tablīgh. He said that he has a good friend who always shares his *karguzari* (reports) after doing overseas *khurūj* (for forty days). Bang Rahman still regularly attends the program in Sri Petaling and always spends forty days a year doing *khurūj*. Below is some of the information he gave me on the development of Jamā'ah Tablīgh:

> As you know, this success is because of Jamā'ah Tablīgh. While Muslims hate Israel, the movement has nine *mohalla*s in Israel. Jamā'ah Tablīgh also has a branch in Canada. This is not including the success of Jamā'ah Tablīgh in France. Before the movement entered France, the King of Saudi asked [then] Prime Minister Jacques Chirac to build a mosque in his country. The prime minister said OK, but only if France could also build a church in Mecca. However, when Jamā'ah Tablīgh came to France, many mosques were built by Jamā'ah Tablīgh members. With other Muslims in France they bought some churches and converted them to mosques.[9]

According to him, such stories increase his spirit to do more *da'wa* in this world and strengthen his commitment to this task.

He contrasted the movement's success in Israel with its lack of success in Palestine. There, he said, the situation is very different, as noted in my field notes:

> Bang Rahman said that there is *karguzari* (a report) about a group who went on *khurūj* to Palestine. The group was mixed Malay-Singaporean and Malay-Malaysian and was unable to speak Arabic. They only spoke English. When they asked the young Palestinian men to go to the mosque as part of *ġast* (inviting people to go to mosque), the young Palestinians asked in English: "Can you speak Arabic?" The group said that they could not speak Arabic. Then, the young said to them: "Go back to your country and first do *da'wa* there". The group then asked: "Is *azan* in Arabic? When this is in Arabic, why don't you go to the mosque?" (field notes, February 2007).

Bang Rahman told me that the main reason for the prohibition of *jum'ah* prayer in al-Aqsha mosque (in Jerusalem) was because "enemies" who were angry with Israel, had given very rousing Friday sermons (*khutbah*) there. This led to stone attacks on Israeli people after *jum'ah*

[9] On Tabligh in France, see Kepel (2000).

prayers, which resulted in a prohibition of *jum'ah* prayers. I was surprised when he said:

> This is the product of hate that has emerged in Palestine. Then Allah sent His anger to this country. Why do they always spread the words of the enemy? This is not Islam! Islam does not teach us to hate non-Muslims. We are required to respect each other. Jamā'ah Tablīgh seeks only to remind people of Allah and His Power on this earth. The Prophet did not spread rage to non-Muslims. What he did was only to revive morality (*akhlāk*). And, with good morality many non-believers convert to Islam.

Bang Rahman had no interest in Salafism. He said that while he was in Medan, he was a member of PKS (*Partai Keadilan Sejahtera*, Prosperous Justice Party).[10] But he quit this party for his own reasons. He only told me that he was not interested in discussing the issue of an Islamic state, because in his view this is not part of what Islam is supposed to do in the world.

My interview with him was very warm. He served me mineral water and his four-year old child gave me a cookie. I did not know why his wife was not introduced to me. But I was sure that she was in the room. According to Acehnese tradition, guests should be introduced to family members; this is a way to perform *silaturrahmi* (brotherhood) among fellow Muslims. From my conversation with him, I learned that he did not often go back to Aceh. He said that most of his family is in Medan and Lhokseumawe. Some members of his family work in a bank. During our conversation, his mobile phone rang continuously. He had two of them. After two hours of conversation he went to his computer near the kitchen to get his other handset. So, he had three mobile phone numbers. I was not surprised, because he said that he was running a business in Kuala Lumpur.

His business involves sending money to and from Malaysia and Indonesia. His company, which has an office in Klang, earns a commission on the money sent (for every one million rupiah, they receive RM15.00). In the main, he deals with *Indons* in Malaysia who want to send money back home. Many of his clients are illegal workers in Malaysia, especially in Kuala Lumpur, Selangor and Penang, who cannot go to a bank to transfer funds as they do not have the proper documents. He said that there is no need for him to go to Indonesia as he has family members there who work in a bank, and they can transfer the money from the bank to the target.

---

[10] On this party, see Damanik (2003).

During our conversation, a number of Indonesians came to his house. He asked me to wait for a moment as he took them to another room with a computer. There he transferred their money via internet banking. He took their money and then called his company in Klang to say that the money was on its way to Indonesia. He said that his company runs entirely by mobile phone and internet banking. The *jum'ah* prayer was approaching. He asked me to go to a mosque near his apartment. Before we went there together by motorbike, he told me about his life's ambition:

> I work like this because I have a dream in my life. I send some of my money to Aceh to help orphans in a *pesantren* in northern Aceh. My family in Medan sends some of the commission to them. When I have a *pesantren*, I will pay for the teacher. That is why I work very hard in Kuala Lumpur.

I wrote about my impressions of his dream and our meeting in my field notes:

> I am not sure about his dreams. In Aceh, building a *pesantren* is not easy. It requires not only funds, but also team work. If he wants to develop a traditional *pesantren*, it would be necessary for him to be involved as a *tengku* (religious teacher) (field notes, 9 February 2007).

We then left for the mosque for *jum'ah* prayer. We went by a motorbike that was very old. He asked me to wait on the main street, because the bike could not carry two people on the badly-made side street. I saw that he was a hard worker, and that his dream about a *pesantren* needed to be respected. However, seeing his house and motorbike, I wondered whether he could be serious. He did not seem to be wealthy, and in his house I had not seen a television, just a wonderful internet connection for his company. When we left his apartment, he locked the door from the outside. I was surprised, but I did not say anything. I thought that his wife and child were inside. I was thinking that this was only for security, but wondered what would happen if his family had a problem and needed to get out.

After the *jum'ah* prayer we had lunch together. He asked me to join his business. I said that I needed to concentrate on my study. Then, he said: "If you write a dissertation, please do not describe Jamā'ah Tablīgh as a movement, but please write about Islam". According to him, this was important because the study was being supervised by an infidel (*kāfir*).

Bang Rahman was in many ways a very fanatical *karkūn*. This came across in his anti-Palestinian ideas, which gives us another picture of Muslim perceptions of fellow Muslims and non-Muslims. This was also

there in his refusal to remain a member of an Indonesian Islamic Party, his rejection of the idea that the establishment of an Islamic state was part of Islam. Two important factors seem to underlie his interpretation of Islam and national and global issues. First is his unwavering commitment to Jamā'ah Tablīgh ("I want to die on this path") which led him to feel the insult dealt to the group of local Jamā'ah Tablīgh who went on *khurūj* to Palestine. This contrasts starkly with most Muslims' views of the Palestine-Israel conflict.[11] More significant here, however, is his concern that Muslims have moved far from God and their understanding of Islam has thus become distorted.

From this perspective, Muslims can be the enemy when they propagate false, non-Islamic teachings as part of Islam. For him, the central problem is in the relationship of Muslims to Allah. If Muslims were closer to Allah, then there would be less anger among humans. His emphasis on Jamā'ah Tablīgh being about Islam rather than doing *da'wa* was intended to emphasise the need to build close relationships between humans and Allah, and not a call to Holy War. This also allows him to rationalise other aspects of his daily life, such as his dream to build a *pesantren* by earning money "from home" through his relationship with illegal workers. His ambition is to earn money but not for money's sake. Nevertheless, his method of earning money is hardly proper. I have met several *karkūn* in Banda Aceh, Selangor, and Kuala Lumpur who are businessmen. All of them had a different perspective on how to be a *karkūn* and a businessman. On my first visit to Sri Petaling, I met a *karkūn* on his way back from IPB. He was a trader in a big market in Tanah Abang in Jakarta, and he said that he would not save his money in any bank in Jakarta. When I was in Cot Goh, I interviewed a *karkūn* who opened a store near the mosque. He said that wherever we stay on this earth, we can always do good business. Haji Chulan, a Chinese *karkūn* whom I met in Sri Perdana Baru had several restaurants in Kuala Lumpur. The case of Bang Rahman is one example of how *karkūn* actualise their identity as *karkūn* and as businessmen. Being the owner of the business may even have made it easier to be involved in the Tablighist program freely, in that they did not have to get the permission of their employer to take time off work.

## Connected to the organisation: the case of Dynnyï

After I went on *khurūj* in mid-January 2007, I was interested in knowing about the conditions of *karkūn* in one of the *halaqah* in Kuala

[11] See also Armstrong (2005).

Lumpur. I sent a text message to a *karkūn* who had assisted me during first *khurūj*. I asked if he could help me to find a *halaqah* to study. He gave me the numbers of two *karkūn* in Sri Perdana Baru whom I could contact to find out about their programs. I sent a message to one of these *karkūn*, Dynnyï (which means "my religion"), asking to join his *halaqah*. He told me to come on Tuesday night when he would introduce me to his *halaqah* in Sri Perdana Baru. As noted in the chapter of *mushāwarah*, this was the first time I encountered a community of Malay *karkūn*. After the *mushāwarah*, a young man shook hands with me asking: "Are you Kamaruzzaman?" He then introduced me to his friends, but said little about himself. I later learned that Dynnyï was Javanese, as his grandfather came from Java and his parents spoke Javanese.

He tended to treat me as a newcomer who was keen to join the movement in his *halaqah* rather than as a researcher who wanted to learn about the movement. He said that if I wanted to know about Jamā'ah Tablīgh, he could not act as my informant. However, if I wanted to know about the organisational system of Jamā'ah Tablīgh, he would help me.

After introducing me to senior *karkūn* in Sri Perdana Baru, he disappeared. He told his friends that I was a PhD student who wanted to know about Jamā'ah Tablīgh. One *karkūn* said to me that my research was good, but that I needed to involve myself more in *khurūj* and *da'wa*. I was not sure whether this conversation was designed to recruit me or just an introduction. I was sitting in a circle where I was asked many questions and had little opportunity to ask about their activities. One *karkūn* asked me about the current political situation in Indonesia. Another asked me to compare Soekarno and Soeharto. Some were also interested in knowing about the tsunami in Aceh. Others wanted to know about my project. Through our discussion it became clear that this *mohalla* consisted of well-educated scholars, government officials and private sector workers. Very few of the *karkūn* in this group said that they had been to Indonesia as part of *ijtimā'* or *khurūj*. Some had visited Indonesia, because they have family there, such as one senior *karkūn* in his fifties who used to travel to Medan and East Java to visit his family. Now, he said, he travels to Indonesia every month just because he likes to be there.

Through Dynnyï, I was given the opportunity to observe the inside of *karkūn* life in Sri Perdana Baru. Dynnyï came from Johor (a southern state of peninsular Malaysia) and was studying for a MA at the university. He was also a *bilāl* or *ta'mir*, that is, a person who devotes himself to guard a *surau*, and this meant that he lived in this *surau* while he studied. Dynnyï had first heard about Jamā'ah Tablīgh in his home area in Sungai Singarupa when he was seventeen years old and had later joined the

movement as an undergraduate student. He said his parents had not objected to his plan to join the movement and that he did his first three-day *khurūj* in Sungai Singarupa. Indeed, his family had supported him, given him money to go on *khurūj* and helped to organise his visas for *khurūj* in IPB after his first degree. Dynnyï had also done a forty-day *khurūj* in Pekan Baru in Sumatra and said he was familiar with the conditions of *karkūn* in parts of Sumatra, such as Riau, Palembang and Jambi. As a university student he had saved his own money (with the help of his family) and gone on *khurūj* in IPB in 2005. He was also the youngest *karkūn* who served as *jamā'ah tasykīl* in the *markāż* and was thus familiar with the organisation of Jamā'ah Tablīgh in Malaysia.

Because time was limited, Dynnyï asked me to join their program in this *mohalla*. I agreed. He said: "We also have another program in Surau Cahaya in Sri Perdana Kencana, which is only two kilometres from this *surau*". I asked him about their program of *khurūj*, to which he replied: "We have one three-day *khurūj* each month". Then, I shook hands with him. While driving my rented car home, I reflected that Dynnyï seemed very smart.

Sri Perdana Baru and Sri Perdana Kencana are new Malay residential areas. Some people have moved here to work as lecturers in state and private universities, lawyers and businessmen in Selangor and Kuala Lumpur. It was therefore not surprising that these wealthier *karkūn* would pay for the dinner. While Dynnyï said that these areas are not known as *karkūn* areas, *karkūn* are very well respected here. For this reason he donates his time to carry out *karkūn* programs in this *mohalla*.

The next week, I received an SMS from him about the program in Surau Cahaya at Sri Perdana Kencana. He said that the *bayānist* was a very famous former artist in Malaysia. I replied that I would attend. Before *maġrib* I went to the *surau* by car. Dynnyï said that it was very easy to find. He just gave me the street number and said that when I saw cars in the street, that would mean I was near the *surau*. When I reached the *surau* I was quite late, but in time for the weekly *bayān*. Again, I did not see Dynnyï around. I asked one *karkūn* whom I had met in Sri Perdana Baru where Dynnyï was. He said Dynnyï was on his way, which made me happy because I thought that this time I might get to interview him. Half an hour into the *bayān*, he entered the *surau* and joined the forum.

After *'ishā* prayer, he approached me, saying, "please join our dinner", which was only a few hundred metres from the *surau*. I followed his directions and came to the Malay restaurant. There he introduced me to the forum. I was very nervous, because he had brought me there to meet senior *karkūn*. The *bayānist* was also with us. Dynnyï sat on my left. He

told me that the best way to learn about this movement was by involving myself in this forum. He said that the weekly meeting in Sri Perdana Baru was also part of this *halaqah* program. However, unlike after the *bayān* in Sri Perdana Baru (see chapter 4 above), where many *karkūn* had dinner together inside the *surau*, this dinner was held at a restaurant. I asked Dynnyï who would pay for this dinner. He said: "the senior *karkūn*". I refer to my field notes about my impression of this dinner with Dynnyï and others:

> When we had dinner I did not see *karkūn* eating in the customary way from one big plate. During this dinner, *karkūn* put what they wanted to eat on to individual plates. And they ordered different drinks. So, I did not see this dinner as a *karkūn* dinner like those during *khurūj* or the *ijtimā'* in Pekan Baru.
>
> As usual, I needed to introduce myself. Then they asked about the tsunami. From my story they told me that the tsunami happened because of GAM (Aceh Free Movement). They said this was punishment from Allah, because GAM killed *karkūn* who spread *da'wa* in Aceh. I did not ask them how this related to the mass killing by the tidal wave. According to them, GAM had wanted to establish an Islamic state, but did not want *da'wa*. I did not understand how they knew this and how they know about GAM. In fact, there were reports in Aceh that GAM killed civilians during the conflict. A *karkūn* also told me that the cause of the earthquake in Pakistan was that some Pakistanis had urinated in water that was to be used by *karkūn* on *khurūj*. Then, he said, Allah sent His punishment to Pakistan and Aceh. A *karkūn* named Ahmad told me that I should not underestimate the movement, because Allah protects the group by His Will (field notes, 5 March 2007).

One of Dynnyï's jobs is to "control" all *karkūn*. I say control because when I took a trip with him to the airport to drop off a *karkūn*, he knew every *karkūn* in his territory. His car was full of information about younger and older *karkūn* such as their addresses and telephone numbers. He said that this enables him to invite them when there are programs in their *mohalla*. There was also information on potential new *karkūn*, such as the names of possible recruits and their dormitory numbers. I was surprised by the amount of information Dynnyï had. During the dinner he had told me nothing about himself or his duties. Instead, he let me learn about their *mohalla* and the movement by connecting me to people and allowing me to participate in activities within the community.

After the *bayān* in Sri Perdana Kencana, Dynnyï asked me to consider going on *khurūj* that month. I agreed and on 27 March 2007 I began *khurūj* with *karkūn* from Sri Perdana Baru. We took *khurūj* in an area near Sri Perdana Baru. Dynnyï sent me a text message to inform me that my

name was included in this trip. I said I would join *khurūj* after *jum'ah* prayer. During this *khurūj* he told me about his job "controlling" young *karkūn* in the university. That is why he carries in his car so much information about the students in his car. The reason he was late to our meeting in Sri Perdana Baru and Sri Perdana Kencana was that he had just finished visiting a campus dormitory to invite young students to attend *karkūn* program in his *mohalla*. He does this twice a week as part of *khususi* or *ġast* (inviting people to the mosque). Thus, he said, he did not have enough time to speak with me. He said that he is successful in attracting young Malays to join this movement. During the *khurūj* he brought two undergraduate students with us, saying, "we need to be respectful of this group, because they are potential members of this movement". During this *khurūj* I slept behind him. The next day he asked me to join him to drop off some *karkūn* at the airport who were taking *khurūj* in Sabah for ten days. The two were a businessman and a lecturer.

Dynnyï describes his role with reference to the NOKIA slogan "connecting people". He certainly seemed to live up to this as he was well-known amongst *karkūn* in the *markāż* and in Sri Perdana Baru for his role in contacting *karkūn* to get them involved in various programs. Two young *karkūn* I met during my second *khurūj* told me that Dynnyï played an important role in organising students to go on *khurūj*. He did this not by telling recruits a lot about himself but by inviting them to involve themselves in the movement and thus learn by doing so. He introduced me to his friends and encouraged me to submerge myself in his *mohalla's* programs. He was also the only young *karkūn* who had been taken a forty-day *khurūj* in IPB and Indonesia. Dynnyï was also very well respected: he was seen as a good *karkūn* in Selangor and known to be helpful. It seemed to me that Jamā'ah Tablīgh not only caters to his spiritual side, but also provides him with status in the organisational structure.

Precisely because his job is to "connect people", Dynnyï was able to give me a lot of information on Jamā'ah Tablīgh and its alliances in Malaysia. Indeed, much of the information I learnt about Jamā'ah Tablīgh in Malaysia I learnt from Dynnyï and his friends. His own life story and the support he receives also told me something about the broader circumstances which allow young Muslims in Malaysia to explore their interest in *da'wa*. For students, in particular, this environment is supported by the good facilities they have at university, such as free accommodation and a chance to study, as well as by earlier *da'wa*. Student leaders have become respected people in Malaysia. This can also be seen in the case of Jamā'ah Tablīgh, where many of senior *karkūn* are important and influential people in Malaysia, according to Dynnyï. Observing Dynnyï, I

was often reminded of what I had read on the history of *da'wa* movement in Malaysia since the early 1980s (Anwar, 1987). Most of the activists were university students at the time and some went on to became national leaders in the country. This is quite a contrast to the reception given to young Acehnese who joined Jamā'ah Tablīgh in the early years in Aceh. Dynnyï was impressive in that he managed to perform an important and hectic organisational role in Jamā'ah Tablīgh while completing his master's degree.

## Conclusion

In this section I sum up this chapter by focusing on several issues. During my fieldwork, I found that a particularly dominant motif amongst *karkūn* was that they are on a spiritual journey that will enable them to evolve from being an "animal" to a "human" in the model of the "perfect man", the Prophet Mohammad (see also the Introduction chapter above). Their involvement in the movement might be described as a search for the real truth. Once they find the truth, many *karkūn* develop what Taylor calls a Reform Master Narrative (RMN) which turns adherents into 100 per cent Christians. I would say that Jamā'ah Tablīgh provides the resources for its members to become 100 per cent Muslims.

The cases presented in this chapter, particularly those of Apa Itanya and Bang Ibrahim, suggest that the transformation of members from an animal to a human state, as conceived in Sufism, is more the result of experience than logic, or more about finding the soul than the mind. At the same time, this process of humanisation is seen by Tablighists as a return of Muslims to their God. We might say that the level of religious awareness among *karkūn* could be ranked at levels six and seven (animal becoming human and human becoming) in the Sufi hierarchy of levels of religious awareness, as set out in my introductory chapter, while most non-active *karkūn*, to the extent that they do not regularly perform righteous activities (*istiqāmah)* are still at level five, in that sense. This is why many *karkūn* perform rituals in their *halaqah* or *mohalla* to gain the highest level. However, it is not easy to achieve, as to reach the highest levels of awareness (those of the "perfect man"), one must be guided by the Prophet Kidr.

'Apa Itanya, the one example of someone who has been so guided, has done so not because of any attachment to Jamā'ah Tablīgh. By contrast, Bang Ibrahim credits JT with saving him from his catastrophic world. His life can be seen as exemplifying the move from *dosa* (sin) to *do'a* (prayer), a move facilitated by Jamā'ah Tablīgh. In a rather different way, his

religious experience within JT assisted Pa' De in his struggles in Malaysia. In his case, Jamā'ah Tablīgh has provided him with spiritual guidance in his working life. This was also true for Dynnyï whose participation in Jamā'ah Tablīgh assisted him to move from *belajar* (study) to *do'a*.

There are other interesting differences among these *karkūn*. Apa Itanya was very free in discussing his religious experience, while Pa' De preferred to keep his struggles and his family problems in Malaysia to himself. Bang Ibrahim was eager to talk about the changes in his life that took place after he joined the movement. Bang Rahman, on the other hand, was motivated to write this study on Islam rather than engage in *da'wa* study and asked me to join his business. While Dynnyï wanted to recruit me as *karkun*, just as he made recruitment of all young Muslims his major task.

As this suggests, my relationships with these different *karkūn* also varied. In the case of Apa Itanya, I played the role of friend to help him explain his mysterious experiences and make him more calm. Pa' De I made my Indonesian "mate", though I could not help his sister-in-law. I did not interview Pa' De, Apa Itanya, Bang Rahman, Bang Ibrahim or Dynnyï in their villages. Instead, I met all of them on their travels, not surprising since if there is anything *karkūn* share it is that they are constantly on the move from one place to another place. They treat the *markāż* as their point of transit in moving "from *dosa* to *do'a*, from *do'a* to *usaha*, and from *belajar* to *do'a*".

Despite the stereotype, *karkūn* are far from lazy people who do nothing but pray to Allah and abandon their families. The dream of Bang Rahman to build his *pesantren* by doing business with his family in Indonesia is a part of the spirit of capitalism, even he wants to die in this movement. While Pa' De was a pious Muslim before and after joining Jamā'ah Tablīgh, he still wants to help his family in Java and his sister in law in Kuantan. The patience of Apa Itanya in making his wife understand his spiritual needs finally led to his family giving him full support. When I met him in Islamic boarding school, I saw that his wife was very respectful of him, even if she did not wear the hijab. Similarly Bang Ibrahim changed his life in order to remain in Cot Goh in a *kampong* near *markāż* and re-built his family life with his second wife. It would be hard to argue then, as detractors are often to do, that pious Muslims who devote themselves to Allah do so at the expense of their families.

This chapter has shown us the nature of the private, internal, religious experiences among *karkūn*. Experiencing their spiritual journey and my role in helping Apa Itanya, lead me to argue that Tablighists have shown that the ultimate aim of the movement is a return to Allah through a return

to the Qur'an and Sunnah. We have also seen that faith among Tablighist means to be the "slave of God" (*'ibad ar-rahmān*) as part of religious experiences which I have examined in previous chapters. In addition, it has shown the nature of the experiences of a range of selected cases that the *imān* present in their daily lives as *karkūn*.

# CONCLUSION

In this final chapter, I want to recall some of the central issues raised in this study. The first relates to a question asked throughout this book, that is, the question of how we can understand the meaning of religious experience among the members of Jamā'ah Tablīgh. In the final section I take a step back from the details of this study to reflect on the academic study of religious experience in general. Here, I consider how my identification as Muslim has led me, firstly, to question dominant social science perspectives on religious experience and secondly, to develop my own model – one based on Islamic philosophies of knowledge – to explain the religious experience of *karkūn*, in terms that I believe are closer to their own understandings.

This study has argued that religious experience within Jama'ah Tablīgh encompasses three dimensions: that of Allah, of the Prophet and of the level of the ordinary member. The religious experiences that members have as a result of participating in ritual activities such as *khurūj, bayān, khidmat* in the *markāż* and *żikir,* are the product of human interpretation. Not all members reach the same level of religious experience as this depends in part on their capacity, interest and willingness to participate in the full range of Jamā'ah Tablīgh activities. Only those at the highest level of religious knowledge will reach the highest level of religious experience. So, for example, within Jamā'ah Tablīgh, it is the *mawlana* (in particular Mawlana Ilyās) who reach the level of being able to produce their own understanding of the teaching of Prophet Muhammad. In terms of my pyramid of religious awareness, discussed in the Introduction, these are people who have achieved level six (see also below). Individuals at this level are able to see the pathway to becoming a religious person by using their "active intelligence" (Holy Spirit, Angel of Knowledge and/or Revelation). This is a person who combines the "three *haqīqahs*" (absolute reality, determined reality and unitary reality) in mind and soul, and on that basis is able to lead people at lower levels.

Despite differences in the religious understanding amongst members, the basis of religious experience is the same for all, that is, their involvement in and acceptance of the ritual activities established by Jamā'ah Tablīgh. As I have endeavoured to show in previous chapters, *karkūn* understand their participation in such rituals in terms of seeking to

enter the world of Allah. Patterned by the founder of the movement, these rituals encourage members to seek the "ultimate reality" (*haqīqah muthlaqah*).[1] The justification that the religious experience of the ultimate reality can be achieved through the rituals of Jamā'ah Tablīgh lies in the belief that these rituals are based on a "roadmap" (the shari'ah) provided by Allah and exemplified in His chosen man, the Prophet Muhammad. Jamā'ah Tablīgh takes it for granted that its preferred "streets" are also a part of this roadmap as they are based on the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (*sunnah rasūl*). In this context, it can be argued that the movement utilises two forms of prophecy identified by Max Weber, that is "exemplary" and "emissary prophecy". Weber writes that:

> Exemplary prophecy points out the path to salvation by exemplary living, usually by a contemplative and apathetic-ecstatic life. The emissary type of prophecy addresses its *demands* to the world in the name of a god. Naturally these demands are ethical; and they are often of an active ascetic character (Weber, 1974: 285).

Both these forms of prophecy are seen in the practice of *khurūj,* the role of *bayān* in every religious activity, and the emphasis on the world of the Prophet Muhammad (*sunnah rasūl*).

As discussed in Chapters Five and Six, the ideology of the movement is based on reaching the light of Muhammad as *insān kamil* (the perfect man). However, this study also shows that *mawlana* play an important role in constructing a perception among Tablighist of what it means to return to the teachings of the Prophet. The *mawlana* of Jamā'ah Tablīgh have produced a religious movement that is embedded in three regions: the Middle East, the origin of Islam; South Asia, the birthplace of Jamā'ah Tablīgh and the main target of *da'wa*, and Southeast Asia, the meeting place of the Middle East and South Asia. In Chapter Two, I examined the reproduction of Jamā'ah Tablīgh and its impact on Muslim society in Kuala Lumpur and Banda Aceh. It is clear that the movement adopted aspects of Islamic teaching from the Middle East, which it then merged with aspects of South Asian Islam in order to create and export its representation of the "true Islam". The emphasis on members going on pilgrimage to IPB is intended to teach *karkūn* the struggle involved in disseminating the *lā Ilā ha Illā Allāh* as the Prophet experienced it. The religious experience and benefit of performing *da'wa* in IPB has therefore nothing directly to do with the socio-cultural or socio-political aspects of those countries, but is concerned with providing *karkūn* with the opportunity

[1] See footnote No.9 in the Introduction.

to expand their religious knowledge and experience by doing *da'wa* in well-tested places.

A major slogan of the movement in the 1920s when Jamā'ah Tablīgh was first established by Mawlana Ilyās was a "return to the Qur'an and Sunnah". By engaging in missionary activity, this movement has also answered the question of how Muslims can return to the "original texts" without the use of violence. The reform movement established by Jamā'ah Tablīgh is based on submission to Allah and the spreading of the words *lā Ilā ha illā Allāh* through the donation of time, funds and self to the path of Allāh (*fī sabīlillāh*). The Tablighist see the ultimate aim of the movement as a return to Allah through a return to the Qur'an and Sunnah. While no such ultimate aim is ever expressed directly to members, we can identify such a goal in the way that members of Jamā'ah Tablīgh whom I met during my fieldwork kept reiterating that all the efforts (and achievements) of this movement are due to Allah.

The religious experience amongst the members of this movement can be seen as the result of what I call a "continuous un-rational discourse". As mentioned in my Introduction, the social sciences typically operate with a "continuous application of rational discourse". This rational discourse is expanded to cover all aspects of human life and experience, including religious life (Binder, 1998) and Sufism (Bruinessen and Howel, 2007). Indeed, the history of reform movements in Islam itself reveals its share of an unwavering application of rational discourses in pursuit of religious reform and a return to the original texts of Islam. In contrast, this study has sought to examine religious experiences which are likely beyond rationality as understood in the social sciences or in some reformist Islamic writings.[2] For almost eighty years Mawlana Ilyās patterned an "un-rational discourse" as I have shown in Chapters Seven and Eight, in which the situation of faith among Tablighist was to be the *slave of God* (*'ibad ar-rahmān*).

The presence of a continuous un-rational discourse can be seen in the movement's effort to remind members to remember and thank Allah (*żikir*) constantly, through the spreading of the *lā Ilā ha illā Allāh*. As discussed in Chapters Three and Four, all Tablighist activities, whether donating time, money or the self, are seen as due to Allah. Thus, the movement provides members a clear-cut pathway to becoming closer to God through donating time, money and self in the service of Allah. As indicated in Chapter Seven, the management of this movement pushes

[2] See also Voll (2007).

members to be good Muslims, that is, as those who submit themselves to Allah, through personal sacrifice on the path of Allah.

Furthermore, there is a link between sacrifice and religious experience. If members of Jamā'ah Tablīgh want to enter into the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad, they must go through the experiences of *sahabat rasūl* (the companions of Prophet Muhammad). This method was introduced by the founder of the movement via the so-called Six Points, which are repeatedly mentioned in all religious sermons (*bayān*) amongst Tablighist. The Six Points characterise Tablighist ideology and are taken from the spirit of *sahabat rasūl*: all religious effort should be under the *tauhid (lā Ilā ha illā Allāh*); the performing of *shalāt* (prayer); the seeking of *'ilm* (knowledge) and the recitation of *żikir* (the remembrance of Allah); the importance of *ikrām-i-Muslim* (respect for Muslims); all religious activities must be undertaken with *ikhlās nīyat* (sincerity of purpose) or *tashīh nīyat* (emendation of intention) and finally, all Tablighist should go on *khurūj* as part of *da'wa* and *tablīgh*.

The constant reiteration of the Six Points is not intended to encourage a Sufist or more ascetic way of life among *karkūn*. Rather, it urges them to move out in order to spread the *lā Ilā ha illā Allāh* around the world, through *khurūj*. As discussed in Chapter Seven, the link between the Six Points and *da'wa* is very strong in this movement. On this basis, Jamā'ah Tablīgh's Six Points endeavour to provide an answer to something that is inherently "un-rational" or beyond words. Put simply, what it means to be "on the path of Allah" is not something we can understand if we stay at home. It is only by undertaking something difficult in the service of Allah that *karkūn* believe they can experience the "un-speakable" "situation of faith". This study has provided a model of how we might rewrite someone's religious experience in terms of a pyramid of religious awareness (see Introduction). Chapter Eight considered the experiences of a range of selected *karkūn* who feel their *imān* present in their daily lives. While not all of them are influenced by the ritual activities of the movement to the same extent or in the same way, the movement provides a field of activities in which they can become closer to Allah without violence or the need to create hostility through the production of an "enemy".[3] The movement can be seen as "radical" in the sense that its founder and members want to return to the original texts of Islam; however, this aim is pursued without violence and demonstrates the need to distinguish more clearly between different interpretations.

---

[3] See for the current study on this in Michael (2006), Sidel (2006, 2003), El Fadl (2001), Davidson (2003), Milton-Edwards (2006), Kepel (2002), Akbarzadeh ed. (2006), and Mazrui (2006).

The question of the spirit of religious revivalism evident in contemporary Islamic movements, particular with respect to radicalism and a return to the original texts. As I noted in Chapter Two, the movement was in part a response to the decline of the Islamic caliphate in 1924. Furthermore, this movement has attempted to build an Islamic caliphate or Islamic state rooted in the experiences of the Prophet Muhammad in Medina, which some scholars refer to as the Medina state (see, for example, Mahdi, 1985; Galston, 1990, Zaman, 1997, Hodgson, 1970, 1974,. Madjid, 1998). Central to this endeavour is the role of the *markāż* as a system of governance within the organisation and the use of the mosque as the centre of all Tablighist activities. It is largely through its mosque-based activities that the movement been able to expand its network around the globe since 1926, including in some Western countries. In this way, the movement has promoted the concept of "reform from below", working silently and determinedly in the spirit of the Prophet Muhammad and his companion to establish an Islamic caliphate.

The movement has its origins in an international *markāż* in Nizamuddin, India. As described in Chapter Three, the role of the *markāż* is to govern the system of organisation. The role of some Tablighist as *shūra* resembles the of *ahl al-hill wa 'aqdi*, while the importance given to the role of *jamā'ah tasykīl* in the recruitment of members to perform *khidmat* in the mosque-based *markāż* can be seen as an example taken from the experience of the Prophet, where he controlled his society from the mosque and entrusted his *sahabat* to spread the word of *lā ilā ha illā Allāh*. The model of decision-making in the movement also tells us about the spirit of Islamic democracy within the movement. The role of *mushāwarah,* in particular, would be in line with such a model,[4] as is the annual meeting in the form of *ijtimā'*, where the movement seeks to mobilise members and new recruits to commit to the spirit of *lā Ilā ha illā Allāh*.

The movement seems to go to the heart of the real meaning of religion or *dīn*, which can be translated as "God's promise". Yet I think there is also a strong link between the meaning of religion in Islam as *dīn* (God's promise) and the idea of an Islamic caliphate, if we accept that the main duty of humankind on earth is to be *khalīfah Allāh* (the vicegerent of Allah). Allah has said: *Wa'iż qāla rabbuka lilmalā'ikah innī jā'ilun fī al-ardhi khalīfah* (Behold, the Lord said to the angels: "I will create a vicegerent on earth).[5] Madjid has called this process of creation a *cosmic*

[4] See also Sadiki (2004); Bustamam-Ahmad (2000).
[5] Sūrah al-Baqarah (2): 30.

*drama* in the Kingdom of Allah (Madjid, 2000, 2003), and it seems to link with the "creative perceptions" of Tablighist in their commitment to Allah from the perspective of *fadhīlat 'amal* (virtues of religious practices), as discussed in Chapter Six. Further research into this movement could contribute to our understanding of whether their forms of organisation and activities could be helpfully understood in terms of Islamic caliphate. Certaintly, this seems difficult to support if Islamic caliphate we have in mind a mainstream political sociology or political science use of the term "state."

What the above discussion suggests is the need to retain Islam on the research agenda of the social sciences in general and not discuss it narrowly in terms of the study of religion. While Smith (2008: 1568) has noted that "Islam is an immensely important religion in the world today, well deserving of careful and thorough investigation on many fronts", it is worth reflecting on how the study of Islam and Islamic scholarship (*'aqīdah*, *sharī'ah*, and *ma'rīfah*) may in fact contribute more generally to the study of society found within the social sciences. What I want to suggest is that the case of Jamā'ah Tablīgh provides us with some fruitful inter-connections between social sciences and Islamic scholarship.

This study has investigated religious experiences and levels of religious awareness among members of a single Islamic group in different settings. Buchman (2004: 133) maintains that "the anthropologist's job is to find such axiomatic ideas and then relate them to human behavior in the unique historically derived sociocultural domains". In some chapters of the book, I have provided some of the axiomatic ideas that have a long tradition in Islamic scholarship which are also found within Jamā'ah Tablīgh, such as *markāż*, *mushāwarah*, *ijtimā'*, *bayān* and *khurūj*. My discussion of these axiomatic ideas enriches our understanding of how members of Jamā'ah Tablīgh experience the religious spirit in their daily lives.

While I have attempted to let the "texts" speak for themselves without undue interpretation by me as insider or outsider, I have added explanations in several chapters, where I open with discussion of the definition and history of key concepts in Islam. I argue that it is important to situate the rituals of Jamā'ah Tablīgh within their Islamic socio-religious context and philosophical tradition. This does not presume, however, that the patterns of particular rituals are fixed and unchanging. As discussed in Chapter Seven, the pattern of such rituals is still open to contestation and debate emanating from particular socio-cultural domains. As I have argued, the main recipe of the success of this movement is the way Tablighist are led to religious experience by submitting themselves to

Allah through their sacrifice of time, self and money. Akber S. Ahmed has noted one of the fundamental difficulties in the anthropological study of Islam and Muslim society:

> The ... fundamental problem facing [Islamic anthropology] concerns the nature of Islam. Islam not only encourages commitment, it demands it; it not only strives for moral consensus, but insists on emotional loyalty as well. Islamic ideology has ...much to say about an entire range of social issues, behavior and organization (Ahmed, 1984:3).[6]

For this reason, I believe it is important that I am a Muslim studying other Muslims, for in this way, the researcher and the research subject are bound together in the same theological concern, that of spreading the *lā Ilā ha illā Allāh*.

In addition, my position as a Muslim researcher has proven important to the research methodologies and conceptual development. As a Muslim, I attempted to access the private religious experiences of *karkūn* through a spiritual hermeneutic (*ta'wīl*), elaborated in Chapter Six. Other (non-Muslim) scholars have suggested similar methods for approaching the religious experience of Muslims, such as Henry Corbin's (1969) "creative imagination", which was later adopted by Webner (2003).[7] Michele Stephen's (1995) notion of "autonomous imagination" in her study of magic and the self is a similar effort. In this study, I have been interested in combining social science methodologies and Islamic scholarship. Specifically, I have argued that we must understand concepts in Islamic studies from two perspectives. First, we must go inside the text to consider the meaning and production of the meaning in it, and second, we must investigate how the concept is implemented in particular Muslim groups and societies. This is what I have termed the spiritual hermeneutic (*ta'wīl*).

On the basis of this approach and my sharing the same theological concern as my informants, I have tried to develop a definition of religion and religious awareness that I believe is more in line with definitions held by members of Jamā'ah Tablīgh. My attempt here was described in terms of a pyramid of religious awareness, which represents the Tablighist view of religious awareness as an evolutionary process of moving beyond their situation as animal to becoming fully human by following the movement's religious activities. As described in this study, *karkūn* attempt to achieve this through their involvement in the movement's "axiomatic ideas". They try to become fully human by donating their time, selves and money in the

---

[6] See also el-Zein (1997), Lukens-Bull (1999).

[7] See also Rahman (1998), Abaza (2000), Mujiburrahman (2001).

path of Allāh. *Mawlana* are important in establishing this formula as shown in Chapters Five and Six, where *mawlana* and *bayānist* explained their understandings of religion to the ordinary *karkūn*. The emphasis that *karkūn* go on *khurūj* to India, Pakistan and Bangladesh is similarly part of the way axiomatic ideas are used to raise members' spiritual awareness.

Through participating in ritual activities, *karkūn* attempt to reach "God's promise" through *'aqīdah, sharī'ah* and *ma'rifah*. For many scholars studying Muslim societies, the focus has been located at the level of shari'ah,[8] which they understand as "Islamic teaching" or the "religion of Islam". In this way, the study of Muslim societies is restricted to a view of "religion as symbol" or "religion as cultural system". A basic problem here concerns the definition of religion as found in the social sciences as opposed to that found in Islam. Maclennan (1922: 602) gives us the following definitions of religion: "Religion is the *true relation* of the soul of God". "It is *communion* with God". "It is *the belief in ever living* God". "It is *the apprehension* of infinite". "It is *the mystical union* with God". "It is a *feeling of absolute* dependence upon God". "It is the *consciousness of our practical relation* to an invisible spiritual order". The italics here are mine; I have used them to emphasise that what is defined as religion here would not satisfy an Islamic definition of religion as *dīn*, but mostly would refer to *'aqīdah*, *sharī'ah* and *ma'rifah*. These definitions are therefore not appropriate for the idea of religion in Islam, but only to clarify how to believe in God in terms of *'aqīdah* (theology), *sharī'ah* (street), and *ma'rifah* (gnosis). The definition of religion as "cultural system" was developed by Clifford Geertz (1973) and has been used for more than two decades in anthropology (Asad, 1983, Morgan, 1977; Frankenberry and Penner, 1999). The word that comes closest to anthropologists' discussion of Islam as religion is arguably "shari'ah", and the definition of religion closer to the Islamic concept of *millah* (the way), not *dīn* (submission).[9] One factor here is that non-Muslims cannot enter the world of God unless they submit to Allah. In other words, non-Muslims can only "swim" in the world of humans and the world of the Prophet, but not reach a higher level of awareness.

---

[8] See also Messick (2001).

[9] Allah says: *Wa man ahsana dīnān mimman aslama wajĥahu lillāhi waĥuwa muhsin wattaba' millah Ibraĥīm hanīfān wattakhaża Allāh Ibraĥīm khalīlān* (Who can be better in *religion* than one who *submits* his whole self to Allah, does good, and follows *the way* of Abraham the true in faith? For Allah did take Abraham for a friend) (Sūrah al-Nisā' (4):125). (See al-'Aqīl 1993 on the transitional process of *millah* to *dīn*).

What I have explored in this study, then, is how best to understand people who submit themselves to Allah. This, I suggest, can be called *Islamic anthropology* through the use of a spiritual hermeneutic (*ta'wīl*). As I have also discussed, terminological problems with terms such as shari'ah, Islamic law and *fiqh* are also major reasons why some researchers cannot understand the religious person. In returning to the original meaning (*ta'wīl*) of written and unwritten words in Islamic scholarship, we are better able to understand private religious experiences, as I did within the Jamā'ah Tablīgh. In sum, I propose that Islamic anthropology be understood as the study of humans who submit themselves to Allah and that this can be achieved by combining the social sciences and Islamic scholarship.

In conclusion, I have raised some thorny questions about the disjuncture between social science and Islamic approaches to the study of Islam and Muslim communities. Some of my dissatisfaction with social science approaches relates to my background in Islamic studies and what I see as Western social sciences' inability to appreciate key aspects of what it means to be Muslim, as well as problems of misunderstanding of Islamic concepts and Islamic traditions. Nevertheless, this ethnographic study of fellow Muslims in Banda Aceh and Kuala Lumpur suggests that there is an important role for social science methodologies in the study of Islam and Muslim communities. To sum up my hope of reconciling this dilemma, I quote from Akbar S. Ahmed who, like me, has seen the value of anthropological approaches:

> [A]nthropology has helped me in understanding, and therefore in making sense of, seemingly strange, exotic customs practised by alien people in far-away places. The contrast between different peoples and their customs and my own environment has helped me understand myself and my society better. Anthropology plays a key role in bridging the gaps that divide people. It can help us appreciate that we are a global community (Ahmed, 1984:4).

# BIBLIOGRAPHY


'Alī, 'Abdullah Yūsuf. 1989. *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'ān*. Maryland: Amana Corporation.

Abaza, Mona. 1994. *Islamic Education: Perception and Exchanges Indonesian Students in Cairo*. Paris: Archipel.

—. 2000. A Note on Henry Corbin and Seyyed Hossein Nasr: Affinities and Differences. *The Muslim World* Vol.90, No.1/2:91-107.

—. 2003. Changing Images of Three Generations of Azharites in Indonesia. In *Islam: Critical Concepts in Sociology*, edited by B. S. Turner. London and New York: Routledge.

—. 2003b. Indonesian Azharites, Fifteen Years Later. *SOJOURN* Vol.18, No.1:139-153.

Abbas, Sirajuddin. 2006. *I'tiqad Ahlusunnah Wal Jamaah*. 32 ed. Jakarta: Pustaka Tarbiyah.

Abdullah, Abdul Rahman Haji. 1992. *Gerakan Islam Tradisional di Malaysia Sejarah dan Pemikiran: Jamaat Tabligh & Darul Arqam*. Kuala Lumpur: Penerbitan Kintan.

—. 1997. *Pemikiran Islam di Malaysia: Sejarah dan Aliran*. Bandung: Gema Insani Press.

Abdullah, Kamarulnizam. 2003. *The Politics of Islamic Identity in Southeast Asia*. Bangi: UKM Publisher.

Abdullah, M. Amin. 1996. *Studi Agama: Normativitas atau Historisitas?* Edited by M. S. Ardani. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar.

—. 1998. Preliminary Remarks on the Philosophy of Islamic Religious Science. *Al-Jāmi'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* No.61:1-26.

—. 2000. Kajian Ilmu Kalam di IAIN Menyongsong Perguliran Paradigma Keilmuan Keislaman Pada Era Milenium Ketiga. *Al-Jāmi'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 65, 6:78-101.

—. 2003. New Horizons of Islamic Studies through Socio-Cultural Hermeneutics. *Al-Jāmi'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* Vol.41, No.11:1-24.

Abdullah, Taufik. 1966. Adat and Islam: An Examination of Conflict in Minangkabau. *Indonesia* No.2 1–24.

—. 1970. Some Notes on the Kaba Tjindua Mato: An Example of Minangkabau Traditional Literature. *Indonesia* No.9 1-22.

—. 1971. *Schools and Politics: The Kaum Muda Movement in West Sumatra (1927-1933)*. New York: Modern Indonesian Project Southeast Asia Program Cornell University.

—. 1996. *Islam dan Masyarakat: Pantulan Sejarah Indonesia*. Jakarta: LP3ES.

Abrahamian, Ervand. 1988. 'Ali Shari'ati: Ideologue of the Iranian Revolution. In *Islam, Politics, and Social Movements*, edited by I. a. I. M. L. Edmund Burke. London: I.B. Tauris.

Abu-Rabi', Ibrahim M. 1995. Salāt. In *The Oxford Encyclopaedia of the Modern Islamic World*, edited by J. L. Esposito. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

—. 2002. A Post-September 11 Critical Assesment of Modern Islamic History. In *11 September: Religious Perspectives on the Causes and the Consequences*, edited by I. Markham and I. M. Abu-Rabi'. Oxford: One World.

—. 2003. *Toward a Critical Arab Reason: The Contributions of the Moroccan Philosopher Muhammad 'Ābid al-Jābirī*. Islamabad: Islamic Research Institute, International Islamic University.

Abu Bakar, Mohammad. 1981. Islamic Revivalism and the Political Process in Malaysia. *Asian Survey* Vol.XXI, No.1:1040-1059.

—. 1991. External Influences of Contemporary Islamic Resurgence in Malaysia. *Contemporary Southeast Asia* Vol.13, No.1:220-228.

Abuza, Zachary. 2003. *Militant Islam in Southeast Asia: Crucible of Terror*. Colorado: Lynne Rienne.

—. 2003b. Funding Terrorism in Southeast Asia: The Financial Network of Al Qaeda and Jemaah Islamiya. *Contemporary Southeast Asia* Vol.25, No.2:169-199.

—. 2004. Muslim, Politics, and Violence in Indonesia: An Emerging Jihadist-Islamic Nexus? *NBR Analysis* Vol.15, No.3. Washington: The National Bureau of Asian Research.

Ahmad, Mumtaz. 1991. The Fundamentalism in South Asia: The Jamaat-i-Islami and the Tablighi of South Asia. In *Fundamentalism Observed*, edited by M. E. Marty and R. S. Appleby. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.

Ahmad, Shukri. 2001. Implikasi Pengaruh Ulama Terhadap Halatuju Perubahan Pemikiran Politik Masyarakat Dalam Wilayah Utara Semenanjung Malaysia Dari 1950-an Hingga 1990-an. *Journal of Ushuluddin* No.14:97-122.

Ahmed, Akbar S. 1984. Defining Islamic Anthropology. *RAIN* No.65:2-4.

—. 1994. *Living Islam: From Samarkand to Stonorway*. New York: Facts on File.

Akbarzadeh, Shahram, ed. 2006. *Islam and Globalization*. 4 vols. London: Routledge.

Akhavi, Shahrough. 1997. The Dialectic in Contemporary Egyptian Social Thought: The Scripturalist and Modernist Discourses of Sayyid Qutb and Hasan Hanafi. *International Journal of Middle East Studies* Vol.29, No.3:377-401.

Almond, Ian. 2002. The Honesty of the Perplexed: Derrida and Ibn 'Arabi on "Bewilderment. *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* Vol.70, No.3: 515-537.

al-'Aqīl, Mahmud Fawwaz. 1993. *Al-Mursyid Ilā Fahm Āyah al-Qur'ān*. Beirut: Dār al-Fikr.

Al-Attas, Syed Muhammad Naquib. 1986. *A Commentary of the Hujjat al-Siddiq of Nur al-Din Al-Raniri*. Kuala Lumpur: Ministry of Culture Malaysia.

Al-Azmeh, Aziz. 1992. Muslim Genealogies of Knowledge. *History of Religions* Vol.31, No.4:403-411.

Al-Gazzalī, Al-Imām. n.d. *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*. Vol. 4. Surabaya: Maktabah wa Mathba'ah Mahkota.

Al-Kandahlawi, Maulana Muhammad Yusuf. 2006. *Muntakhab Ahadits*. Yogyakarta: Ash-Shaff.

Al-Rānirī, Nūrdīn Muhammad Jaylānī ibn 'Alī Hasanī ibn Muhammad Hamīd. n.d. Shirāt al-Mustaqīm. In *Sabīl al-Muhtadīn*. Singapore: al-Haramayn.

Al-Rasheed, Madaw. 2008. The Local and the Global in Saudi Salafism. *ISIM Review* No.21:8-9.

Al Faruqi, Maysam J. 2005. *Umma*: The Orientalist and the Qur'ānic Concept of Identity. *Journal of Islamic Studies* Vol.16, No.1:1-34.

Ali, Jan. 2003. Islamic Revivalism: The Case of the Tablighi Jama'at. *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* Vol.23, No.1:173-181.

An-Na'im, Abdullahi Ahmed. 2007. *Islam and the Secular State: Negotiating the Future Shari'a*. . Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Andaya, Barbara Watson, and Leonard Y. Andaya. 2001. *A History of Malaysia*. 2 ed. Hampshire: Palgrave.

Anderson, J.N.D. 1959. *Islamic Law in the Modern World*. Connecticut: Greenwood Press Publisher.

Anwar, Zainah. 1987. *Islamic Revivalism in Malaysia*. Petaling Jaya: Pelanduk

—. 2003. The Fundamentalist Challenge in Malaysia. *Kultur: The Indonesian Journal For Muslim Cultures* Vol.3, No.1:143-142.

Appleby, R. Scott. 2000. *The Ambivalence of the Sacred: Religion, Violence, and Reconciliation*. New York: Rowman & Lilletfield Publishers.

—. 2002. History in the Fundamentalist Imagination. *The Journal of American History* Vol.89, No.2:498-511.

Armstrong, Karen. 2005. *Jerusalem: One City, Three Faiths*. New York: Ballantine Books.

Asad, Talal. 1983. Anthropological Conception of Religion: Reflection on Geertz. *Man* Vol.18, No.2:237-259.

—. 2003. *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam and Modernity*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Asyaukanie, A. Luthfi. 1998. Tipologi and Wacana Pemikiran Arab Kontemporer. *PARAMADINA* Vol.1, No.1:58-95.

Ayoub, Mahmouh. 1996. Redeptive Suffering in Islam: A Study of the Devotional Aspects of 'Āshūrā' in Twelver Shi'ism. In *An Anthology of Islamic Studies*, edited by H. Federspiel. Montreal: McGill Institute of Islamic Studies.

Aziz, Abdul. 2004. The *Jamā'ah Tablīgh* Movement in Indonesia: Peaceful Fundamentalist. *Studia Islamika* Vol.11, No.3:467-518.

Azra, Azyumardi. 1994. *Jaringan Ulama Timur Tengah dan Kepulauan Nusantara Abad XVII dan XVIII: Melacak Akar-Akar Pembaharuan Pemikiran Islam Indonesia*. Bandung Mizan.

—. 2003b. Militant Islamic Movements in Southeast Asia: Socio-Political and Historical Contexts. *Kultur: The Indonesian Journal For Muslim Cultures* Vol.3, No.1:17-28.

—. 2003c. *Surau Pendidikan Islam Tradisional dalam Transisi dan Modernisasi*. Jakarta: Logos.

—. 2004. *The Origins of Islamic Reformism: Networks of Malay-Indonesian and Middle Eastern 'Ulama in the 17th and 18th Centuries*. Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press.

Bachtiar, Harsja W. 1985. The Religion of Java: A Commentary. In *Readings on Islam in Southeast Asia*, edited by A. Ibrahim, S. Siddique and Y. Hussain. Singapore: ISEAS.

Baharuddin, Shamsul Amri. 1983. A Revival in the Study of Islam in Malaysia. *Man* Vol.18, No.2:399-404.

—. 1997. Identity Construction, Nation Formation, and Islamic Revivalism in Malaysia. In *Politics and Religious Renewal in Muslim Southeast Asia*, edited by R. W. H. a. P. Horvatich. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

—. 1998. A Question of Identity: A Case Study of Malaysian Islamic Revivalism and the Non-Muslim Response. In *Nation-State, Identity*

*and Religion in Southeast Asia*, edited by T. Ayabe. Singapore: Singapore Society of Asian Studies.

—. 2004. *From British to Bumiputera Rule*. Singapore: ISEAS.

Barton, Greg. 1995. Neo-Modernisme: A Vital Synthesis of Traditionalist and Modernist Islamic Thought in Indonesia. *Studia Islamika* Vol.2, No.3:1-75.

—. 1997. Indonesia's Nurcholish Madjid and Abdurrahman Wahid as Intellectual 'Ulamā': the meeting of Islamic Traditionalism and Modernist in Neo-Modernist Thought. *Islam and Christian-Muslim* 8, 3 (337-342).

—. 1999. *Gagasan Islam Liberal di Indonesia: Pemikiran Neo-Modernisme Nurcholish Madjid, Djohan Effendi, Ahmad Wahib, dan Abdurrahman Wahid*. Jakarta: Paramadina.

—. 2004. *Indonesia's Struggle: Jemaah Islamiyah and the Soul of Islam*. Sidney: University of New South Wales Press.

Bayat, Asef. 2005. Islamism and Social Movement Theory. *Third World Quarterly* Vol.26, No.6:891-908.

Bianche, Ugo. 1979. The History of Religions and the 'Religio Anthropological Approach'. In *Science of Religion: Studies in Methodology*, edited by L. Honko. New York: Mouton Publishers.

Binder, Leonard. 1988. *Islamic Liberalism: A Critique of Development Ideologies*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.

Bottignolo, Bruno. 1995. *Celebrations with the Sun: An Overview of Religious Phenomena Among the Badjaos*. Manila: Ateneo de Manila University Press.

Bowen, John R. 1989. Salāt in Indonesia: The Social Meanings of an Islamic Ritual. *Man* Vol.24, No.4:600-619.

—. 2004. *Religion in Practices: An Approach to the Anthropology of Religion*. New York: Pearson.

Braam, Ernesto. 2006. Travelling with the Tablighi Jama'at. *ISIM Review* (17):42-43.

Bruinessen, Martin van. 1994. The Origins and Development of Sūfī Orders (*Tarekat*) in Southeast Asia. *Studia Islamika* Vol.1, No.1:1-23.

—. 1995. Muslim of the Dutch East Indies and the Caliphate Question. *Studia Islamika* Vol.2, No.3:115-140.

—. 1996. Muslim Fundamentalism: Something to be Understood or to be Explained Away? In *An Anthology of Islamic Studies*, edited by H. M. Federspiel. Montreal: Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University.

—. 1998. Studies of Sufism and the Sufi Orders in Indonesia. *Die Welt des Islams* 38 (1):192-219.

—. 1998. *Tarekat Nasyabandiah di Indonesia*. Revised ed. Bandung Mizan.
—. 1999. *Kitab Kuning, Pesantren, and Tarekat: Tradisi-Tradisi Islam di Indonesia*. Bandung: Mizan.
—. 2002. Genealogies of Islamic Radicalism in post-Suharto Indonesia paper was written for the international colloquium In *L'islam politique à l'aube du XXIème siècle*. Tehran.
Brunner, Rainer, and Werner Ende, eds. 2001. *The Twelver Shia in Modern Times: Religious Culture & Political History*. Leiden: Brill.
Bubalo, Anthony, and Greg Fealy. 2005. Joining the Caravan? The Middle East, Islamism and Indonesia. In *Lowy Institute Paper,* No.5. Sydney: Lowy Institute for International Policy.
—. 2008. Zealous Democrats: Islamism in Egypt, Indonesia and Turkey. In *Lowy Institute Paper,* No.25. Sydney: Lowy Institute for International Policy.
Buchman, David. 2004. Structuralism Reconsidered: Ibn al-'Arabi and Cultural Variation in Muslim Societies. *The Muslim World* Vol.94, No.1:131-138.
Burns, Gene. 1996. Ideology, Culture, and Ambiguity: The Revolutionary Process in Iran. *Theory and Society* Vol.25, No.3:349-388.
Bustamam-Ahmad, Kamaruzzaman. 1999. Kontribusi Daerah Aceh terhadap Perkembangan Awal Hukum Islam di Indonesia. *Al-Jāmi'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 64:143-175.
—. 2000. Menggagas Demokrasi Agama di Indonesia. *Profetika*. Vol.1, No.1: 37-55.
—. 2001. *Relasi Islam dan Negara dalam Perspektif Modernisme dan Fundamentalisme*. Magelang: Indonesia Tera.
—. 2002. *Islam Historis: Dinamika Studi Islam di Indonesia*. Yogyakarta: Galang Press.
—. 2003. Konsep Negara Era Moden. *PEMIKIR* No.31:233-258.
—. 2004. *Wajah Baru Islam di Indonesia*. Yogyakarta: UII Press.
—. 2007. The Application of Islamic Law in Indonesia: The Case Study of Aceh. *Journal of Indonesian Islam* Vol.1, No.1:135-180.
—. 2007b. From Islamic Revivalism to Islamic Radicalism in Southeast Asia: A Case of Malaysia. In *Culture, Identity, and Religion in Southeast Asia*, edited by A. D.B.Cook. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
—. 2008. The History of *Jamā'ah Tablīgh* in Southeast Asia: The Role of Islamic Sufism in Islamic Revival. *Al-Jāmi'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* Vol.46, No.2:353-400.

Bustamam-Ahmad, Kamaruzzaman, and Akh. Minhaji. 2003. Arah Baru Studi Hukum di Indonesia. *PERTA* Vol.6, No.2:40-53.

Carter, April. 2001. *The Political Theory of Global Citizenship*. London: Routledge.

Chambert-Loir, Henri, and Claude Guillot. 2007. *Ziarah & Wali di Dunia Islam*. Translated by J. Couteau, A. A. Harapan, Machasin and A. Feillard. Jakarta: Ecole francaise d'Extreme-Orient.

Chittick, William C. 2007. *Ibn 'Arabi: Heir to the Prophets*. Edited by P. Crone, *Makers of the Muslim World*. Oxford: Oneworld.

Choueiri, Youssef M. 1997. *Islamic Fundamentalism*. Revised ed. London and Washington: Pinter.

Clifford, James, and George E. Marcus, eds. 1986. *Writing Culture: The Poetics & Politic of Ethnography*. Barkeley: University of California Press.

Cook, David. 2005. *Understanding Jihād*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Corbin, Henry. 1969. *Creative Imagination in the Sūfism of Ibn 'Arabī*. Translated by R. Manheim. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Crouch, Harold. 2005. Radical Islam in Indonesia: Some Misperceptions. In *Islamic Terrorism in Indonesia: Myths and Realities*, edited by M. Vicziany and D. Wright-Neville. Clayton: Monash Asia Institute.

Crow, Karim Douglas. 2008. Awakening Islamic Tradition Education. In *Conference of Ulama*. Banda Aceh.

Dabashi, Hamid. 1995. Shī'ī Islam: Modern Shī'i Thought. In *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*, edited by J. L. Esposito. New York: Oxford University Press.

Damanik, Ali Said. 2003. *Fenomena Partai Keadilan: Transformasi 20 Tahun Gerakan Tarbiyah di Indonesia*. Bandung: Teraju.

Danielou, Jean. 1959. Phenomenology of Religion and Philosophy of Religion. In *The History of Religion: Essays in Methodology*, edited by M. Eliade and J. M. Kitagawa. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Daudy, Ahmad. 1983. *Allah dan Manusia dalam Konsepsi Syeikh Nuruddin ar-Raniry*. Jakarta: Rajawali Press.

Davidson, Lawrence. 2003. *Islamic Fundamentalism: An Introduction*. Revised & Updated ed. Westport: Greenwood Press.

Dekmejian, R. Hrair. 1985. *Islam in Revolution: Fundamentalism in the Arab World*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press.

Desker, Barry. 2002. Islām and Society in Southeast Asia After September 11. In *Working Paper Series*, No.33. Singapore: Institute of Defence and Strategis Studies.

—. 2003. The Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) Phenomenon in Singapore. *Contemporary Southeast Asia* Vol.25, No.3:489-506.

Dhofier, Zamakhsyari. 1994. *Tradisi Pesantren: Studi tentang Pandangan Hidup Kyai*. Jakarta: LP3ES.

Dijk, C. van. 2003. The Hearts and Minds of the People: Southeast Asia after September 11, 2001. *Kultur: The Indonesian Journal for Muslim Cultures* Vol.3, No.1:29-62.

Dobbin, Christine. 1974. Islamic Revivalism in Minangkabau at the Turn of the Nineteenth Century. *Modern Asian Studies* Vol.8, No.3:319-345.

Dreyfuss, Robert. 2005. *Devil's Game: How The United States Helped Unleash Fundamentalist Islam*. New York: Metropolitan Books Henry Holt and Company.

Dulyakasem, Utai, and Lertchai Sirichai, eds. 2005. *Knowledge dan Conflict Resolution: The Crisis of the Border Region of Southern Thailand*. Nakhon Si Thammarat: School of Liberal Arts, Walailak University, The Asia Foundation, The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

Effendy, Bahtiar. 2004. Islamic Militant Movements in Indonesia: A Preliminary Account For Its Socio-Religious and Political Aspects. *Studia Islamika* Vol.11, No.3:393-428.

el-Zein, Abdul Hamid. 1977. Beyond Ideology and Theology: The Search for the Anthropology of Islam. *Annual Review of Anthropology* Vol.6:227-254.

Eliraz, Giora. 2004. *Islam in Indonesia: Modernism, Radicalism, and the Middle East Dimension*. Portland: Sussex Academic Press.

Esposito, John L. 1984. *Islam and Politics*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press.

———, ed. 1997. *Political Islām: Revolution, Radicalism, or Reform?* London: Lynne Riener.

Esposito, John L., and John O. Voll. 1999. *Demokrasi di Negara-Negara Muslim: Problem dan Prospek*. Translated by R. Astuti. Bandung: Mizan.

—. 2001. *Makers of Contemporary Islam*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Fadl, Khaled Abou El. 2001. *Rebellion and Violence in Islamic Law*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

—. 2005. *The Great Theft: Wrestling Islam from the Extremists*. San Fransisco: Harper San Fransico.

Fealy, Greg. 2003. *Ijtihād Politik Ulama: Sejarah NU 1952-1967*. Yogyakarta: LKiS.

—. 2005. Half a Century of violent jihad in Indonesia: a Historical and Ideological Comparison of Darul Islam and Jema'ah Islamiyah. In *Islamic Terrorism in Indonesia: Myths and Realities*, edited by M. Vicziany and D. Wright-Neville. Clayton: Monash Asia Institute.

Fealy, Greg, and Virginia Hooker, eds. 2006. *Voices of Islam in Southeast Asia: A Contemporary Sourcebook*. Singapore: ISEAS.

Federspiel, Howard M. 1970. *Persatuan Islam: Islamic Reform in Twentieth Century Indonesia*. Ithaca: Cornell University Modern Indonesian Project.

—. 1970b. The Muhammadijah: A Study of An Orthodox Islamic Movement in Indonesia. *Indonesia* No.10:57-79.

—. 1999. Islamic Fundamentalist in Late-Colonial Indonesia: The Persatuan Islam Revisited. *Al-Jāmi'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 64:39-62.

—. 1999. Muslim Intellectual in Southeast Asia. *Studia Islamika* Vol.6, No.1:41-76.

—. 2001. *Islam and Ideology in the Emerging Indonesian State: the Persatuan Islam (Persis), 1923-1957*. Leiden: Brill.

—. 2002. Modernist Islam in Southeast Asia: A New Examination. *The Muslim World* Vol.92:371-386.

Feener, R. Michael. 1999. Tabut: Muharram Observances in the History of Bengkulu. *Studia Islamika* 6, 2:87-130.

—. 2004. Religious Networks Between the Middle East and Southeast Asia. *IIAS Newsletter* No.33:27.

—. 2004b. Hybridity and the "Hadrami Diaspora" in the Indian Ocean Muslim Networks. *Asian Journal of Social Sciences* Vol.32, No.3:353-372.

Ferdows, Emad. 1983. The Reconstruction and Class of Conflict in Iran. *MERIP Report* No.113:11-15.

Frankenberry, Nancy K., and Hans H. Penner. 1999. Clifford Geertz's Long-Lasting Moods, Motivations, and Metaphysical Conceptions. *The Journal of Religion* Vol.79, No.4:617-640.

Gaborieau, Marc. 2000. The Transformation of Tablīghī Jamā'at into A Transnational Movement. In *Travellers in Faith: Studies of the Tablīghī Jamā'āt as a Transnational Islamic Movement for Faith Renewal*, edited by M. K. Masud. Leiden: Brill.

Galston, Miriam. 1990. *Politic and Excellence: The Political Philosophy of AlFarabi*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Geertz, Clifford. 1960. *The Religion of Java*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.

—. 1973. *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books.

—. 1985. The Religion of Java. In *Readings on Islam in Southeast Asia*, edited by A. Ibrahim, S. Siddique and Y. Hussain. Singapore: ISEAS.
—. 2002. An Inconstant Profession: The Anthropological Life in Interesting Times. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 31:1-19.
Gerth, H.H., and C. Wright Mills, eds. 1974. *From Max Weber in Sociology*. London and Boston: Routledge.
Giddens, Anthony. 2006. *Sociology*. 5 ed. Cambridge: Polity Press.
Gleave, R., and E. Kermel. 1997. *Islamic Law: Theory and Practice*. New York: I.B. Tauris.
Gleave, Robert. 2000. *Inevitable Doubt: Two Theories of Shi'ī Jurisprudence*. Leiden: Brill.
Gleave, Robert M. 2002. Imāmī Shīʿī Refutations of Qiyās. In *Studies Islamic Legal Theory*, edited by B. G. Weiss. Leiden: Brill.
Graham, William A. 1993. Traditionalism in Islam: An Essay in Interpretation. *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* Vol.23, No.3:495-522.
Griffith, William E. 1979. The Revival of Islamic Fundamentalism: The Case of Iran. *International Security* Vol.4, No.1:132-138.
Gunaratna, Rohan. 2002. *Inside Al-Qaeda: Global Network of Terror*. New York: Columbia University Press.
—, ed. 2003. *Terrorism in the Asia Pacific: Threat and Response*. Singapore: Eastern University Press.
Haddad, Yvonne Y. 1983. Sayyid Qutb: Ideologue of Islamic Revival In *Voices of Resurgent Islam*, edited by J. L. Esposito. New York: Oxford University Press.
Hafez, M.H. 1997. Explaining the Origins of Islamic Resurgence: Islamic Revivalism in Egypt and Indonesia. *The Journal of Social, Political, and Economic Studies* Vol.22, No.3:295-324.
Hallaq, Wael B. 1986. On the Origin of the Controversy about the Existence of Mujtahids and the Gate of Ijtihād. *Studia Islamica* 63:129-141.
—. 1995. Ahl Al-Hall Wa-al-'Aqd. In *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*, edited by J. L. Esposito. New York: Oxford University Press.
—. 1997. *A History of Islamic Legal Theories: An Introduction to Sunnīn Usūl al-Fiqh*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
—. 2001. *Authority, Continuity and Change in Islamic Law*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
—. 2002. *Takhrīj* and the Construction of Juristic Authority. In *Studies in Islamic Legal Theory*, edited by B. G. Weiss. Leiden: Brill.

Halliday, Fred. 1980. Iran's Revolution: The First Years. *MERIP Report* No.88:3-5.

Hamid, Ahmad Fauzi Abdul. 2000. Political Dimensions of Religious Conflict in Malaysia: State Response to an Islamic Movement. *Indonesia and the Malay World* Vol.28, No.80:32-65.

—. 2004. Islam, Weberism and Economic Development: An Adjunct to Nagata's Outline of the Arqam Experiment in Malaysia (1968-1994). *Global Change, Peace & Security* Vol.16, No.2:169-179.

Handler, Richard. 1991. An Interview with Clifford Geertz. *Current Anthropology* Vol.32, No.5:603-613.

Haq, M. Anwarul. 1972. *The Faith Movement of Mawlānā Muḥammad Ilyās*. London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd.

Hassan, Noorhaidi. 2000. In Search of Identity: The Contemporary Islamic Communities in Southeast Asia. *Studia Islamika: Indonesian Journal for Islamic Studies* Vol.7, No.3:67-110.

Hassan, Sharifah Zaleha Syed. 2006. Political Islam in Malaysia: The Rise and Fall of Al Arqam. *Asian Cultural Studies* 15 (Special Issues):43-55.

Hawwa, Sa'īd. n.d. *Jund Allāh Tsaqāfatan wa Akhlāqān*. n.p.: n.p.

Hodgson, Marshall G.S. 1970. The Role of Islam in World History. *International Journal of Middle East Studies* Vol.1, No.1:99-123.

—. 1974. *The Venture of Islam*. 3 vols. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Horikoshi, Hiroko. 1987. *Kyai dan Perubahan Sosial*. Jakarta: P3M.

Hourani, Goerge F. 1976. Islamic and Non Islamic Origins of Mu'tazilite Ethical Rationalism. *International Journal of Middle East Studies* Vol.7, No.1:59-87.

Howell, Julia Day, and Martin van Bruinessen. 2007. Sufism and the 'Modern' in Islam. In *Sufism and the 'Modern' in Islam*, edited by M. v. Bruinessen and J. D. Howell. New York: I.B. Tauris.

Huntington, Samuel P. 1997. *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. London: Touchstone Books.

Hwang, In-Wong. 2003. *Personalized the Politics Malaysian State under Mahathir*. Singapore: ISEAS.

Ibrāhīm, Haji Sa'id Haji. 1998. *'Aqīdah Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah*. Kuala Lumpur: Dār al-Ma'rifah.

Ibrahim, Saad Eddin. 1980. Anatomy of Egypt's Militant Islamic Groups: Methodological Note and Preliminary Findings. *International Journal of Middle East Studies* Vol.12, No.4:423-453.

—. 1982. Egypt's Islamic Militants. *MERIP Report* No.103:5-14.

ICG. 2001. Indonesia: Violence and Radical Muslim. Jakarta/Brussel: International Crisis Group.
—. 2002. Impact of the Bali Bombings. Jakarta/Brussel.
—. 2002. Al-Qaeda in Southeast Asia: The Case of "Ngruki Network" in Indonesia. Brussel/Jakarta: International Crisis Group.
—. 2002. Indonesia Backgrounder: How The Jemaah Islamiyyah Terrorist Networks Operates. Jakarta/Brussels: International Crisis Group.
—. 2006. Terrorism in Indonesia: Noordin's Networks. In *Asia Report* No.114: International Crisis Group.
Jackson, Michael. 1996. Introduction: Phenomenology, Radical Empiricism, and Anthropological Critique. In *Things as They Are: New Directions in Phenomenological Anthropology*, edited by M. Jackson. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
Jafri, Sayed Husain M. 1995. Shī'i Islam: Historical Overview. In *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*, edited by J. L. Esposito. New York: Oxford University.
Jamhari. 2000. In The Center of Meaning: *Ziarah* Tradition in Java. *Studia Islamika* Vol.7, No.1:51-90.
—. 2003. Mapping Radical Islam in Indonesia. *Studia Islamika* Vol.10, No.3:1-28.
—. 2005. Fundamentalism and the Implementation of *Sharī'a*. In *A Portrait of Contemporary Indonesian Islam*, edited by C. S. Bamualim. Jakarta: CLS and KAS.
Johansen, Baber. 1999. *Contingency in A Sacred Law: Legal and Ethical Norms in the Muslim Fiqh*. Leiden: Brill.
Jomo, K.S. , and Ahmad Shabery. 1992. Malaysia's Islamic Movement. In *Fragmented Vision: Culture and Politics in Contemporary Malaysia*, edited by J. S. Kahn and F. L. K. Wah. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
Jones, Sidney. 1980. "It Can't Happen Here": A Post Khomeini Look at Indonesia Islam. *Asian Survey* Vol.20, No.3:311-323.
—. 1984. The Contraction and Expansion of the "*Umat*" and the Role of the Nahdatul Ulama in Indonesia. *Indonesia* 38:1-20.
—. 2003. *Jema'ah Islamiyah*: A Short Description. *Kultur: The Indonesian Journal For Muslim Cultures* Vol.3, No.1:105-114.
Kahn, Joel S. 1996. *Culture, Multiculture, Postculture*. London: SAGE.
—. n.d. New forms of Religious Experience in a Postsecular Age: Secularism, Science and Religion in Asia and the West: La Trobe University.
Kamali, Mohammad Hashim. 1991. *Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence*. Revised ed. Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society.

Kasimin, Amran. 1991. *Religion and Social Change among the Indigenous People of the Malay Peninsula*. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.

Keddie, Nikki R. 1980. Iran: Change in Islam; Islam and Change. *International Journal of Middle East Studies* Vol.11, No.4:527-542.

—. 1988. Iranian Revolution in Comparative Perspective. In *Islam, Politics, and Social Movements*, edited by I. a. I. M. L. Edmund Burke. London: I.B. Tauris.

Kepel, Gilles. 2000. Foi Et Pratiques: Tablighi Jama'at in France. In *Travellers in Faith: Studies of the Tablīghī Jamā'āt as a Transnational Islamic Movement for Faith Renewal*, edited by M. K. Masud. Leiden: Brill.

—. 2002. *Jihād: The Trail of Political Islam*. Translated by A. F. Roberts. Cambridge The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Khan, Maulana Wahiduddin. 1986. *Tablīgh Movement*. New Delhi: The Islamic Centre.

Khan, Rafiq M. 1962. *In The Footsteps of the Prophets*. London: MacMillan.

Khatab, Sayed. 2004. Arabism and Islamism in Sayyid Qutb's Thought on Nationalism. *The Muslim World* Vol.94, No.2:217-244.

Kheng, Cheah Boon. 2002. *Malaysia: The Making of A Nation*. Singapore: ISEAS.

Khuluq, Lathiful. 1998. The Notion of Love of God in Hallāj. In *The Dynamics of Islamic Civilizations*. Yogyakarta: Titian Ilahi Press.

Knibbe, Kim, and Peter Versteeg. 2008. Assessing Phenomenology in Anthropology: Lessons from the Study of Religion and Experience. *Critique of Anthropology* Vol.28, No.1:47-62.

Kraince, Richard G. 2000. The Role of Islamic Student Groups in the *Reformasi* Struggle: KAMMI (*Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Muslim Indonesia*). *Studia Islamika* Vol.7, No.1:1-50.

Kuntowijoyo. 2001. *Muslim Tanpa Masjid*. Bandung: Mizan.

Kurzman, Charles. 1996. Structural Opportunity and Perceived in Social Movement Theory: The Iranian Revolution of 1979. *American Sociological Review* Vo.61, No.1:153-170.

Laffan, Michael Franciss. 2003. *Islamic Nationhood and Colonial Indonesia: The Umma below the winds*. London and New York: Routledge Curzon.

—. 2004. An Indonesian Community in Cairo: Continuity and Change in A Cosmopolitan Islamic Milieu. *Indonesia* No.77:1-26.

Lee, Dwight E. 1942. The Origins of Pan-Islamism. *The American Historical Review* Vol.47, No.2:278-287.

Lewis, Bernard. 2002. *What Went Wrong? The Clash Between Islam and Modernity in the Middle East*. New York: Oxford University Press.

—. 2003. *The Crisis of Islam: Holy War and Unholy War*. New York: Oxford University.

Liebesny, Herbert J. 1975. *The Law of the Near & Middle East: Readings, Cases, & Material*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Lim, Merlyna. 2005. Islamic Radicalism and Anti-Americanism in Indonesia. In *Policy Studies* No.18. Washington: East West Center.

Lowry, Joseph. 2002. Does Shafi'ī have a Theory of Four Sources of Law? In *Studies in Islamic Legal Theory*, edited by B. G. Weiss. Leiden: Brill.

Lukens-Bull, Ronald. 2005. *A Peaceful* Jihād*: Negotiating Identity and Modernity in Muslim Java*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

—. 1999. Between Text and Practice: Considerations in the Anthropological Study of Islam. *Marburg Journal of Religion* Vol.4, No.2:1-21.

MacLennan, S.F. 1922. Religion and Anthropology. *The Journal of Religion* Vol.2, No.6:600-615.

Madjid, Nurcholish. 1998. Islam dan Politik: Suatu Tinjauan Atas Prinsip-Prinsip Hukum dan Keadilan. *PARAMADINA*, Vol.1, No.1: 48-57.

—. 2000. The Islamic Concept of Man and Its Implications for the Muslims' Appreciation of the Civil and Political Rights. *Al-Jāmi'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* Vol.65, No.6:39-64.

—. 2003. What does it Mean to be Human: Qur'ānic Perspectives. In *Science and Religion in the Post-Colonial World*. Yogyakarta: Center for Religious and Cross-Cultural Studies, Graduate Program, Gadjah Mada University.

Mahdi, Muhsin. 1981. Al-Farabi and the Foundation of Islamic Philosophy. In *Islamic Philosophy and Mysticism*, edited by P. Morewedge. New York: Delmar.

Mahmood, Saba. 2001. Rehearsed Spontaneity and the Conventionality of Ritual: Diciplines of *Salāt*. *American Ethnologist* Vol.28, No.4:827-853.

Mālik, Imām. 2005. *Al-Muwatta'*. Beirut: Dār al-Fikr.

Mandaville, Peter. 2001. *Transnational Muslim Politics: Reimagining the Umma*. New York: Routledge.

Mansurnoor, Iik Arifin. 1997. Recent Trends in the Study of Islamic Revivalism in Contemporary Malaysia. *Asian Research Trends* 7:39-73.

—. 2003. Radicalization of Islamic Discourse among Mulims in Southeast Asia: An Historical Reinterpretation. *Kultur: The Indonesian Journal For Muslim Cultures* 3,2:63-104.

Marcus, George E., and Michael M.J. Fisher. 1986. *Anthropology as Cultural Critique: An Experimental Moment in the Human Sciences*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Marlow, Louise. 1997. *Hierarchy and Egalitarianism in Islamic Thought*. Cambridge: Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge.

Marmura, Michael E. 1995. Sunnī Islam: Historical Overview. In *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*, edited by J. L. Esposito. New York: Oxford University Press.

Marty, Martin E., and R. Scott Appbleby, eds. 1991. *Fundamentalism Observed*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.

Mas'ud, Abdurrahman. 2006. *Dari Haramain ke Nusantara: Jejak Intelektual Arsitek Pesantren*. Jakarta: Kencana.

Masud, Muhammad Khalid. 2000. The Growth and Development of the Tablīghī in India. In *Travellers in Faith: Studies of the Tablīghī Jamā'at as a Transnational Islamic Movement for Faith Renewal*, edited by M. K. Masud. Leiden: Brill.

—, ed. 2000. *Travellers in Faith: Studies of the Tablīghī Jamā'at as a Transnational Islamic Movement for Faith Renewal*. Leiden: Brill.

Masud, Muhammad Khalid, Brinkley Messick, and David S. Power, eds. 1996. *Islamic Legal Interpretation*. Harvard: Harvard University Press.

Masyhudi, In'amuzzahidin. 2002. *Wali-Sufi Gila*. Yogyakarta: Ar-Ruzz.

Mazrui, Ali M. 2006. *Islam between Globalization and Counter-Terrorism* Edited by S. Kafrawi, A. M. Mazrui and R. Sebuhara. Britain: James Currey.

Messick, Brinkley. 2001. Indexing the Self: Intent and Expression in Islamic Legal Acts. *Islamic Law and Society* Vol.8, No.2:151-178.

Metcalf, Barbara D. 1978. The Madrasa Deoband: A Model of Religious Education in India. *Modern Asian Studies* Vol.12, No.1:111-134.

—. 1993. Living Hadīth in the Tablīghī Jama'āt. *The Journal of Asian Studies* Vol.52, No.3:584-608.

—. 1996. Meandering *Madrasas*: Knowledge and Short-term Itinerancy in the Tablighi Jama'at. In *The Transmission of Knowledge in South Asia: Essays on Education, Religion, History, and Politics*, edited by N. Crook. Bombay: Oxford University Press.

—. 2002. *'Traditionalist' Islamic Activism: Deoband, Tablighis, and Talibs*. Leiden: Brill.

—. 2002. "Traditionalist" Islamic Activism: Deoband, Tablighis, and Talibs. In *Understanding September 11*, edited by C. Calhoun, P. Price and A. Timmer. New York: Social Science Research Council.

—. 2004. *Islamic Contestations: Essays on Muslims in India and Pakistan.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Meuleman, Johan Hendrik. 1996. Reactions and Attitudes Towards the Darul Arqam Movement in Southeast Asia. *Studia Islamika* 3,1:43-78.

Michael, George. 2006. *The Enemy of My Enemy The Alarming Convergence of Militant Islam and the Extreme Right.* Kansas: University Press of Kansas.

Milton-Edwards, Beverley. 2006. *Islam and Violence in the Modern Era.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Minhaji, Akh. 1999. Reorientasi Kajian Ushul Fiqh. *Al-Jāmi'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* Vol.63, No.6:12-28.

—. 1997. Ahmad Hassan and Islamic Legal Reform in Indonesia, Ph.D Thesis McGill University, Montreal.

Moaddel, Mansoor. 1992. Ideology as Episodic Discourse: The Case of the Iranian Revolution. *American Sociological Review* Vol.57, No.3:353-379.

—. 2001. Conditions for Ideological Production: The Origins of Islamic Modernism in India, Egypt, and Iran. *Theory and Society* Vol.30, No.5:669-731.

Morgan, John. 1997. Religion and Culture as Meaning Systems: A Dialogue between Geertz and Tillich. *The Journal of Religion* Vol.57, No.4:363-375.

Muhaimin, A.G. 1996. God and Spiritual Beings in Cirebon-Javanese Belief System: A Reluctant Contribution Against the Syncretic Argument. *Studia Islamika* Vol.3, No.2:23-57.

Mujiburrahman. 2001. The Phenomenological Approach in Islamic Studies: An Overview of a Western Attempt to Understand Islam. *The Muslim World* Vol.91, No.3/4:425-449.

Mukti, Ali. 1970. *An Introduction to the Government of Acheh's Sultanate.* Yogyakarta: Yayasan Nida.

Mulyadi, Sukidi. 2005. The Travelling Idea of Islamic Protestantism: a Study of Iranian Luthers. *Islam and Christian Muslim Relations* Vol.16, No.4:401-412.

—. 2006. Max Weber's Remarks on Islam: The Protestant Ethic among Muslim Puritans. *Islam and Christian Muslim Relations* Vol.17, No.2:185-205.

Muniron. 1999. Pandangan al-Ghazali tentang *Ittihād* dan *Hulūl. PARAMADINA* Vol.1, No.2:145-161.

Muzaffar, Chandra. 2006. Political Marginalization in Malaysia. In *Indian Communities in Southeast Asia*, edited by K. S. Sandhu and A. Mani. Singapore: ISEAS.

Nagata, Judith. 1980. Religious Ideology and Social Change: The Islamic Revival in Malaysia. *Pacific Affairs* Vol.53, No.3:405-439.

—. 1983. Islamic Revival and the Problem of Legitimacy among Rural Religious Elites in Malaysia. *MAN* Vol.17, No.1:42-57.

—. 1984. *Reflowering of Malaysian Islam: Religious, Radical and Their Roots*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia.

—. 2001. Beyond Theology: Toward an Anthropology of "Fundamentalism". *American Anthropologist* Vol.103, No.2:481-498.

—. 2004. Alternative Model of Islamic Governance in Southeast Asia: Neo-Sufism and the Arqām Experiment in Malaysia. *Global Change, Peace & Security* Vol.16, No.2:99-114.

—. 2006. Religion and Ethnicity among the Indian Muslims of Malaysia. In *Indian Communities in Southeast Asia*, edited by K. S. Sandhu and A. Mani. Singapore: ISEAS.

Nasr, Seyyed Hossein. 1964. *Three Muslim Sages*. New York: Caravan Books.

Neat, N. Ross. 1983. Insiders and Outsiders in the Study of Religious Traditions. *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* Vol.51, No.3:459-476.

Nettler, Ronald. 1994. A Modern Islamic Confession of Faith and Conception of Religion: Sayyid Qutb's Introduction to the Tafsir, fi Zilal al-Qur'an. *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* Vol.21, No.1:102-114.

No Plans By Perak, Kelantan to Ban Tabligh. 1992. *New Strait Times*, 13 March

Noer, Deliar. 1973. *The Modernist Muslim Movement in Indonesia, 1900-1942*. London: Oxford University Press.

Noor, Farish A. 2003. The Localization of Islamist Discourse in the *Tafsīr* of Tuan Guru Nik Aziz Nik Mat, *Murshid'ul Am* of PAS. In *Malaysia Islam, Society and Politics*, edited by V. Hooker and N. Othman. Singapore: ISEAS.

—. 2003b. Reaping the Bitter Harvest after Twenty Years of State Islamization: The Malaysian Experience Post-September. In *Terrorism in the Asia Pacific: Threat and Response*, edited by R. Gunaratna. Singapore: Eastern University Press.

Nyazee, Imran Ahsan Khan. 1994. *Theories of Islamic Law: The Methodology of Ijtihād* Islamabad: The International Institute of Islamic Thought.

Palimbani, 'Abdus Samad. n.d. *Sīyar al-Salikīn*. 4 vols. Indonesia: Maktabah Ihyā' al-Kutub al-'Arabiyyah.

Paul, Ludwig. 1999. "Iranian Revolution" and Iranian-Islamic Revolutionary Ideology. *Die Welt des Islams* Vol.39, No.2:183-217.

Peacock, James L. 1978. *Muslim Puritans: Reformist Psychology in Southeast Asian Islam*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press.

Peters, Rudolph. 1996. *Jihād in Classical and Modern Islam*. Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers.

Power, David S. 1986. *Studies in Qur'ān and Hadīth: The Formation of the Islamic Inheritance*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Rahman, Fazlur. 1970. Islamic Modernism: Its Scope, Method and Alternatives. *International Journal of Middle East Studies* Vol.1, No.4:317-333.

Rahman, Yusuf. 1998. Spiritual Hermeneutics (*Ta'wīl*): A Study of Henry Corbin's Phenomenological Approach. *Al-Jāmi'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* Vol.62, No.12:1-16.

Rahnema, Ali, ed. 1994. *Pioneers of Islamic Revival*. London: Zed Books.

Rashid, Tahmina. 2006. Radical Islam Movements: Gender Construction in Jamaat-i-Islami and Tabligh-i Jamaat in Pakistan. *Strategic Analysis* 30, 2:2006.

Rasler, Karen. 1996. Concessions, Repression, and Political Protest in the Iranian Revolution. *American Sociological Review* Vol.61, No.1:132-152.

Rauf, M. A. 1964. *The Life and Teching of the Prophet of Muhammad*. Kuala Lumpur: Longmans.

Reetz, Dietrich. 2003. Living like the Pious Ancestors: The Social ideal of the missionary movement of the Tablighi Jama'at. In *DAVO Conference*.

—. 2003. Sūfī Spirituality Fires Reformist Zeal: The Tablighi Jama'at in todays' India and Pakistan. In *Workshop "Modern Adaptation of Sūfī-Islam"*. Centre for Modern Oriental Studies, Berlin.

—. 2005. Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband and its Self-Representation on the Media. *Islamic Studies* Vol.44, No.2:209-227.

—. 2005. Living like the Pious Ancestors: The Social Ideal of the Missionary of the Tablighi Jama'at. In *DAVO Conference*. Hamburg.

Riddel, Peter G. 2002. Schools of Islamic Thought in Southeast asia. In *Islam in Southeast Asia and China: Regional Faithlines and Faultlines on the Global Ummah*. Hong Kong.

—. 2003. *Islam and the Malay-Indonesian World: Transmission and Responses*. Singapore: Horizon Books.

Roberts, Robert. 1924. *The Social Laws of the Qoran: Considered, and compared with thos of the Hebrew and Other Ancient codes*. London: Curzon Press.

Roff, William. 1967. *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*. New Have: Yale University Press.

—. 1970. Indonesian and Malay Students in Cairo in the 1920's. *Indonesia* 9:73-87.

Roth, Guenther, and Max Weber. 1976. History and Sociology in the Works of Max Weber. *The British Journal of Sociology* Vol.27, No.3 (Special Issues, History and Sociology):306-318.

Rowthon, Chris, Sara Benson, Joe Bindloss, and Et.al. 2001. *South-East Asia: An A Shoestring*. Melbourne: Lonely Planet Publications.

Roy, Olivier. 2004. *Globalised Islam: The Search for New Ummah*. London: Hurst & Company.

Saby, Yusny. 1995. Islam and Social Change: The Role of The 'Ulama in Acehnese Society. Ph.D. Thesis, Temple University.

Sachedina, Abduaziz Abdulhussein. 1988. *The Just Ruler (al-sultān al-'ādil): The Comprehensive Authority of the Jurist in Imamite Jurisprudence*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Sachs, Jeffrey. 2005. *The End of Poverty: How We Can Make it Happen in Our Lifetime*. London: Penguin.

Sadiki, Larbi. 2004. *The Search for Arab Democracy: Discourses and Counter-Discourses*. London: C. Hurst & Co.

Salleh, Muhammad Syukri. 1994. An Ethical Approach to Development: The Arqam Philosophy and Achievements. *Humanomics* Vol.10, No.1:25-60.

—. 1999. Recent Trends in Islamic Revivalism in Malaysia. *Studia Islamika* Vol.6, No.2:39-64.

Sandhu, Kernial Singh. 2006. The Coming of the Indians to Malaysia. In *Indian Communities in Southeast Asia*, edited by K. S. Sandhu and A. Mani. Singapore: ISEAS.

Schacht, Joseph. 1975. *The Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence*. Oxford: The Clarendon Press.

—. 1996. *An Introduction to Islamic Law*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Scharbrodt, Oliver. 2007. The Salafiyya and Sufism: Muhammad 'Abduh and his *Risālat al-Wāridāt* (Treatise of Mystical Inspirations). *Bulletion of SOAS* Vol.70, No.1:79-115.

Schimmel, Annemarie. 1975. *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina.

—. 1994. *Deciphering the Signs of God: A Phenomenological Approach to Islam*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Schmid, Alex. 2004. Terrorism - The Definitional Problem. *Case Western Reserve Journal of International Law* Vol.36, No.2/3:375-419.

Sela, Avraham, ed. 2002. *The Continuum Political Encyclopaedia of the Middle East*. Revised and Updated ed. New York: Continuum.

Seng, Ann Wan. 2005. *Rahsia Arqām: Menyingkap 'sisi gelap' Arqam*. Kuala Lumpur: Millennia.

—. 2005b. *Al-Arqām Di Sebalik Tabir*. Selangor: Penerbit Universiti Malaya.

Serajul Islam, Syed. 1998. The Islamic Independence Movement in Pattani of Thailand and Mindano of the Philippines. *Asian Survey* Vol.38, No.5:441-456.

—. 2005. *The Politic of Islamic Identity in Southeast Asia*. Singapore: Thomson.

Shahab, An Nadhr M. Ishaq. n.d. *Khurūj Fī Sabīlillāh: Sarana Tarbiyah Ummat Untuk Membentuk Sifat Imaniyyah*. Bandung: Al-Islam Press.

Shepard, William. 1992. The Development of the Thought of Sayyid Qutb as Reflected in Earlier and Later Editions of 'Social Justice in Islam'. *Die Welt des Islams* Vol.32, No.2:196-236.

Siddique, Sharon. 1985. Conceptualizing Contemporary Islam: Religion or Ideology? In *Readings on Islam in Southeast Asia*, edited by S. S. Ahmad Ibrahim, and Yasmin Hussain. Singapore: ISEAS.

Sidel, John T. 2003. Other School, Other Pilgrimages, Other Dreams: The Making and Unmaking of Jihad in Southeast Asia. In *Southeast Asia over Three Generations: Essays Presented to Benedict R. O'G. Anderson*, edited by J. T. Siegel and A. R. Kahin. Ithaca: Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University.

—. 2006. *Riots, Pogroms, Jihad: Religious Violence in Indonesia*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Sikand, Yoginder. 1998. The Origin and Growth of the Tablighi Jama'at in Britain. *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* Vol.9, No.2:71-192.

—. 2002. *The Origins and Development of the Tablighi Jama'at (1920-2000)*. New Delhi: Orient Longman.

—. 2006. The Tablighi Jama'at and Politics: A Critical Re-Appraisal. *The Muslim World* 96:175-195.

—. 2007. The Reformist Sufism of the Tablighi Jama'at: The Case of the Meos of Mewat, India. In *Sufism and the 'Modern' in Islam*, edited by M. v. Bruinessen and J. D. Howel. New York: I.B. Tauris.

—. 2003. The Tablighi Jama'at and Politics. *ISIM Newsletter* 13: 42-43.

Sila, Muhammad Adlin. 2001. The Festivity of Maulid Nabi in Cikoang, South Sulawesi: Between Remembering and Exaggerating the Spirit of Prophet. *Studia Islamika* Vol.8, No.3:1-56.

Sirozi, Muhammad. 2005. The Intellectual Roots of Islamic Radicalism in Indonesia. *Muslim World* Vol.95, No.1:81-120.

Smith, Christian. 2008. Future Directions in the Sociology of Religion. *Social Forces* Vol.86, No.4:1561-1589.

Sokefeld, Martin. 1999. Debating Self, Identity, and Culture in Anthropology. *Current Anthropology* Vol.40, No.4:417-447.

Sonn, Tamara. 1995. Tawhīd. In *The Oxford Encyclopaedia of the Modern Islamic World*, edited by J. L. Esposito. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Speight, R. Marston. 1995. Hadīth. In *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*, edited by J. L. Esposito. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Spiro, Melford E. 1979. *Symbolism and Functionalism in the Anthropological Study of Religion*. Edited by L. Honko, *Science of Religion Studies in Methodology*. The Hague, Paris, New York: Mouton Publishers.

Steenbrik, Karel A. 1988. *Kitab Suci atau Kertas Toilet? Nuruddin Ar-Raniry dan Agama Kristen*. Yogyakarta: IAIN Sunan Kalijaga Press.

Steenbrink, Karel A. 1984. *Beberapa Aspek Tentang Islam di Indonesia Abad ke-19*. Jakarta: Bulan Bintang.

Stephen, Michele. 1995. *A'aisa's Gifts: A Study of Magic and the Self.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Stern, Jessica. 2005. *Terror in the Name of God: Why Religious Militants Kill*. New York: Harper Collins.

Stewart, Devin J. 1998. *Islamic Legal Orthodoxy: Twelver Shiite Response to the Sunni Legal System*. Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press.

Sugunnasil, Wattana. 2006. Islam, Radicalism, and Violence in Southern Thailand. *Critical Asian Studies* Vol.38, No.1:119-144.

Sukarta, Sujadi. 1999. The Religio-Political Attitude of the *Syaykh* Rashid Rida in Response to the French Authority in Tunisia by the Colonial Time (A Case Study of the French Law of Naturalization through Rashīd Ridā's *Fatwā*). *Al-Jāmi'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* Vol.63, No.6:50-62.

Sulaiman, Miswar. 2006. *Menuju Jalan Sunnah Rasulullah SAW: Pengenalan Awal Jamaah Tabligh*. Banda Aceh: Yayasan Pena.

Sulaiman, Sadek J. 1998. Democracy and Shūra. In *Liberal Islam: A Sourcebook*, edited by C. Kurzman. New York: Oxford University Press.

Suma, Muhammad Amin. 2002. *Ijtihād Ibnu Taimiyyah dalam Fiqih Islam*. Jakarta Pustaka Firdaus.

Tan, Andrew, and Kumar Ramakhrishna, eds. 2002. *The New Terrorism: Anatomy, Trends and Counter-Strategies*. Singapore: Eastern University Press.

Taylor, Charles. 1989. *Sources of the Self: The Making of The Modern Identity*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

—. 2007. *A Secular Age*. London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Thomas, Murray R. 1988. The Islamic Revival and Indonesian Education. *Asian Survey* Vol.28, No.9:879-915.

Troll, Christian W. 1985. Five Letters of Maulana Ilyas (1885-1944), The Founder of the Tablighi Jama'at Translated, Annotated and Introduced. In *Islam in India: Studies and Commentaries*, edited by C. W. Troll. Delhi: Vikas Publishing House.

Turner, Bryan S. 1974. Islām, Capitalism and the Weber Theses. *The British Journal of Sociology* Vol.25, No.2:230-243.

Upadhyay, R. 2006. "Islamic Revivalism: The Curious of Tabligh Jama'at. http://www.saag.org/papers6/paper569.html.

Vikor, Knut S. 2000. Jihād, 'Ilm and Tasawwuf: Two Justification of Action from the Idrisi Tradition. *Studia Islamica* 90: 153-176.

Voll, John O. 2007. Contemporary Sufism and Current Social Theory. In *Sufism and the 'Modern' in Islam*, edited by Martin van Bruinessen and Julia D. Howell. London: I.B. Tauris.

Waadenburg, Jacques. 1995. Sunnī Islam: Modern Sunnī Thought. In *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*, edited by J. L. Esposito. New York: Oxford University Press.

Wach, Joachim. 1958. *The Comparative Study of Religions*. Edited by J. M. Kitagawa. New York: Columbia University Press.

Wahyudi, Yudian. 2003. Arab Responses to Hasan Hanafi's *Muqaddima fī 'Ilm al-Istighrāb*. *The Muslim World* Vol.93, No.2:233-248.

Weber, Max. 1974. The Social Psychology of the World Religions. In *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, edited by H. H. Gerth and C. W. Mills. London: Routledge

Wehr, Hans. 1976. *Arabic-English Dictionary: The Hans Wehr Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*. Edited by J. M. Cowan. Third ed. New York: Spoken Language Services.

Werbner, Pnina. 2003. *Pilgrims of Love: The Anthropology of a Global Sufi Cult*. Indianapolis & Bloomington: Indian University Press.

Williams, John Alden. 1995. Khawārij. In *The Oxford Encyclopaedia of the Modern Islamic World*, edited by J. L. Esposito. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Yusuf, Imtiyaz, and Lars Peter Schmidt, eds. 2006. *Understanding Conflict and Approaching Peace in Southern Thailand*. Bangkok: Konrad Adenauer Stiftung.

Zada, Khamami. 2002. *Islam Radikal: Pergulatan Ormas-Ormas Islam Garis Keras di Indonesia*. Bandung: Teraju.

Zakariyya, Maulana Muhammad. 2006. *Himpunan Fadhilah Amal*. Yogyakarta: Ash-Shaff.

—. n.d. *Faza'il-E-A'mal*. New Delhi: Millat Book Centre.

Zaman, Muhammad Qasim. 1997. The Caliphs, the 'Ulamā', and the Law: Defining the Role and Function of the Caliph in the Early 'Abbāsid Period. *Islamic Law and Society* Vol.4,No.1:1-36.

Zin, Ab Aziz Mohd, and et.al, eds. 2006. *Dakwah Islam di Malaysia*. Kuala Lumpur Universiti Malaya Press.

Zubaida, Sami. 1988. An Islamic State? The Case of Iran. *Middle East Report* No.153: 3-7.

## *Newspapers*

5000 Pekerja Awam Ikuti Tabligh. 1992. *Berita Harian*, 14 March, 3.

Gerakan Tabligh Tak Halang JAWI Ambil Alih Pentabiran Masjidnya Nilai $3 Juta. 1992. *Berita Harian*, 18 March.

Jemaah Tabligh masih boleh diberi Nasihat. 1992. *Berita Harian*, 14 April, 11.

Jumlah Ahli Kurang Ilmu, Abaikan Tugas Hanya Kecil. 1992. *Berita Harian*, 14 April, 11.

Kerajaan Kaji Kesan Pergerakan Tabligh. 1992. *Berita Harian*, 18 March, 22.

Melaka Haram Jemaah Tabligh. 1992. *Berita Harian*, 12 March, 1.

Malacca Bans Tabligh. 1992. *New Straits Times*, 12 March.

Muis Haram tabligh. 1992. *Berita Harian*, 14 March, 17.

Sarawak Patuh Pusat Islam. 1992. *Berita Harian*, 23 March, 18.

# INDEX


Abduh, Muhammad, 32, 36, 39, 187,
Aceh, 14, 24, 25, 27, 28, 29
  Ulama in, 30
  Tablighist in, 48-54
Active intelligence, 20, 219
Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, 6, 97-122, 250
Allāh, 5, 8, 23, 25, 63, 65, 91, 122, 143, 144, 145, 151, 152, 154, 159, 170, 171, 190, 191, 192, 194, 197, 198, 203, 213, 214, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 264
*Amānah*, 110, 111, 122, 125
American-Islam, 3
*Amīr sāf*, 74, 92, 95, 96, 169, 171, 172, 174, 175, 183, 188
Angel of knowledge, 20, 219
Anthropology, 10-14, 16, 19, 21-22, 45, 224, 225-227.
anthropological approaches, 22
Anthropology of Islam, 12,
Arab-Israeli conflict, 3
*Ar-rahmān al-rahīm* (Most gracious, most merciful), 193
Arya Samaj, 33
Attas, Syed Naquib al, 15, 21
Ataturk, Kemal, 31

Bazaar, 68, 79, 120, 121
*bayān hidāyah*, 80, 114, 188
Bedroom for foreign karkūn, 65, 66,
*Chilla*, 36, 38, 164,
Christian, 4,
  Post-Christian, 8, 9, 10, 58,
Christendom, 9
CIA, 26
Cot Goh, 25, 27, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 125, 127, 134, 137, 138, 140, 141, 142, 146, 147, 191, 203, 204, 206, 211, 217

Da'wa and tablīgh, 164
*Dārul* Arqām, 2, 9, 40, 44, 47, 63,
Dayah, 53, 55, 163, 193
Deoband, 1, 32, 33, 34
Deviant, 22, 26, 45, 46, 47, 54, 56, 112, 193,

El Fadl, Khaled Aboud, 5
England, 42, 45, 181

Foreign *karkūn*, 63, 67, 76, 79,90, 128
Fundamentalist, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 12, 22, 30, 31, 40, 54, 57-58, 64, 82, 191, 225,
  approach, 5

Fundamentalism and radicalism, 4

Gambia, 13
*Ġast*, 75, 111, 171, 173-178, 184, 189, 208, 215,
Geertz, Clifford,10, 11, 12, 226,
Giddens, Anthony, 15
Gnosis and Sufist cosmologies, 19.

*Hidāyah*, 184,
Human as animal, 18
  with reason, 18
  with reason and belief, 18
  worships his creator, 18
  good behaviour, 18
  becoming human, 18
Human as human who humanised humanity, 20

Ibn Hanbal, 5-6
Ibn Taimiyyah, 6, 8
*Ijtimā'*, 27, 28, 39, 61, 84, 104, 105-108, 110-130
administration of, 132

*Ikhlās niyyat*, 109, 122, 151, 166, 168, 243, 244
*Ikrām al-Muslim* (respect for Muslims), 49, 53, 67, 119, 129, 140, 149-150, 154, 222
*Ilāh al-nās* (The god (of Judge) of mankind), 199
*Ilm* and *zikir*, 88, 167, 250
Indonesia, 1, 2, 3, 12, 27, 33, 35, 49, 53, 54, 55, 58, 60, 68, 73, 82, 92, 96, 100, 112, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 120, 123, 124, 125, 126, 130, 131, 133, 134, 136, 139, 142, 147, 181, 217, 218, 221, 222, 223, 228, 229, 231, 234, 236, 248, 249, 250, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 263, 265, 266, 268, 269, 272, 274, 275, 277, 279, 280, 281, 284
*Insān kāmil*, 18, 22, 23
Islamdom, 9, 162
Islamic caliphate, 8, 31-32, 34, 36, 55, 82-83, 116, 223-224
Islamic law, 2, 4, 15, 34, 50, 60, 80, 126, 156, 246
Islamic Radicalism, 1,2,3, 4, 6
in Southeast Asia, 3,
Islamic fundamentalism, 4, 5, 7, 10, 60
Islamic revival, 30,
Islamic revivalism, 1, 2, 8, 43, 44, 58,
Islamic terrorism, 3, 4, 7
Islamdom, 9, 162
Islamic state, 4, 10, 157, 228, 233
Istiqbāl, 66, 79, 100, 113, 119-120
Jamā'ah Tablīgh, 1, 2, 3, 9, 10, 11, 13, 15, 16, 26, 27, 29, 30, 32, 33, 35, 36, 37, 38, 40, 41, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 69, 70, 75, 76, 77, 78, 80, 84, 87, 88, 90, 92, 93, 95, 96, 97, 99, 100, 102, 105, 106, 113, 114, 115, 116, 118, 120, 122, 125, 126, 127, 128, 130, 131, 133, 138, 139, 143, 145, 150, 151, 153, 155, 156, 157, 159, 164, 165, 166, 170, 172, 173, 174, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 186, 204, 205, 209, 210, 211, 218, 220, 223, 225, 227, 228, 231, 234, 238, 239, 240, 241, 243, 244, 246
The Emergence of, 36
The History of, 32

*Jamā'ah tasykīl*, 61, 74-76, 94-97, 100, 108-111, 125-126, 151,152, 165-166, 170, 213, 223, 163
Japan, 12, 42
*Jihād*, 3, 7, 77, 109, 142,
Jihadism, 6,

Kampung Baru, 43, 76
Kapitang Keling, 48
*Karguzari*, 61-62, 91-92, 100-102, 105-106, 123, 186, 208
Khidr, 197,
Khidmat, 39, 63, 65, 67, 77, 78, 79, 80, 82, 89, 92, 93, 94, 104, 120, 122, 123, 128, 132, 152, 152, 168, 171, 196, 200, 201, 219, 223
Kuala Lumpur, 1, 16, 26, 28, 29, 32, 33, 45, 46, 47, 49, 53, 55, 60, 63, 66, 68, 69, 70, 73, 75, 76, 81, 82, 85, 93, 108, 109, 110, 112, 118, 133, 142, 144, 145, 146, 147, 158, 165, 173, 174, 180, 181, 184, 186, 207, 217, 219, 220, 225, 226, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 239, 246, 248, 251, 265, 267, 276, 278, 284

Lampung, 126

Malaysia, 1, 2, 3, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 32, 42, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 67, 68, 73, 75, 79, 82, 83, 84, 85, 87, 92, 96, 99, 100, 108, 109, 114, 116, 117, 118, 130, 131, 133, 142, 146, 147, 174, 181, 186, 199, 207, 210, 218, 220, 221, 222, 223, 228, 231, 232, 234, 236, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 256, 263, 264, 266, 267, 270, 273, 274, 278, 284
*Mālik al-nās* (The King (or Ruler) of mankind), 199
*mastūrat* (female *karkūn*), 87
Maududi, Abu al-A'la, al, 32, 33, 187,
Mawlana Ilyas, 1, 9, 32, 33, 34-39, 55, 152, 187-188, 219, 221
Mecca, 5, 6, 32, 73, 88, 105, 138, 146, 158, 161, 162, 208
Medina, 5, 6, 7, 32, 36, 73, 82, 88, 105, 158, 161, 162, 223
*Mohalla*, 26, 28, 59, 61, 72, 75, 76, 78, 81, 85, 87, 88, 90, 92-98, 100, 103, 105, 108, 115, 123, 134-137, 153, 160, 169-170, 177, 184, 186, 187, 208, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216
Mohammad, Mahathir, 45
Moses, 164, 197,
Mu'tazilah, 6, 8
Muntakhab Ahadits, 178
*Mushāwarah* , 85-87, 90, 95, 96, 102-104, 106-108, 111, 114, 122, 123, 130, 135
  type of, 93
  coordination of, 94,
  decision made by, 97
  duration of, 102
  expressing ideas in, 98.
  *jorh* kind of, 100.
  authority of *amīr* in, 120
  performance of *da'wa* through, 132
  the morning, 136
  ideas are not approved in, 152
*mużakarah*, 64, 100, 111, 118, 146, 171, 172, 157, 177, 178, 182, 188

Naqsyabandi, 38, 129
Nizamuddin, 40, 54, 60, 61, 66, 70, 71, 72, 76, 81, 87, 88, 92, 94, 95, 99, 105, 106, 107, 108, 113, 153, 158, 167

Phenomenology, 16-18
Phenomenological analysis, 22.
Phenomenological approach, 16-17
Prophet Khidr, 215
*Purdah*, 39

Qutb, Sayyid, 8, 32, 187

Ottoman Empire, 6, 82,
Reform Master Narrative, 2, 216
Religious experience, 5, 7, 11, 12, 14, 17, 19, 20, 27, 28, 57, 58, 73, 83, 84, 107, 130, 133, 155, 157, 158, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 206, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 224, 225, 227,
  active intelligence, 20
  human awareness, 22
  definition of, 17,
  impact of, 191,
  levels of, 23, 103, 156, 159,
  meaning of, 16
  transformation of, 29,
  understand, 15

Salafism, 3, 5-6, 31, 209,
Saturday night gatherings (*malam markāż*), 87
Serambi Indonesia, 204
Shah Waliullāh, 33
Shūra, 50, 53, 61, 63, 71-73, 80, 84, 95, 100, 102, 105-106, 111, 120,

122, 123, 127-128, 152, 201, 223
Social science, 8-9, 11, 21, 24, 219, 221, 224-227
Sociology, 12, 14-16, 224,
Sociology of religion, 16,
Spiritual hermeneutic, 156, 225, 227,
sunnah rasūl, 239
*Sūrah al-'Ashr* (Time through the ages), 193
*Sūrah al-Falaq* (Daybreak), 198
*Sūrah al-Fātihah* (The Opening), 193
*Sūrah al-Fīl* (The Elephant), 195
*Sūrah al-Humazah* (The Scandalmonger), 194
*Sūrah al-Ikhlāsh* (The Purity of Faith), 198
*Sūrah al-Kāfirūn* (Those who reject faith), 196
*Sūrah al-Kawtsar* (The Abundance), 196
*Sūrah al-Lahab* (The Flame), 197
*Sūrah al-Mā'ūn* (Neighbourly Assistance), 196
*Sūrah al-Nās* (Humankind), 198
*Sūrah al-Nashr* (The Help), 197
*Sūrah Quraisy* (The Tribe of Quraish), 195
*Syor*, 106

*Ta'ām*, 67, 74, 96, 120, 171, 183, 201,
*Ta'lim*, 75, 102, 111, 168, 174, 177, 178, 185, 189
*Ta'lim* and *mużākarah*, 192
*Taqaza,* 39, 80, 97
Tauhid (*la Ilā ha illā Allāh*), 139, 140, 141, 222

Ultimate reality, 17, 220,
*'Urs*, 129

Wahab, Muhammad Abd, 6, 8
Wahabism, 3, 5-6
Weber, Max, 8, 10, 16, 220
Werbner, Pnina, 11, 12, 14, 38, 129, 157,
Western, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 19, 24, 28, 34, 35, 43, 44, 174, 242, 246, 273, 278
Zakariyya, Maulana Muhammad, 171, 177,
Zikr, 100, 116, 140, 154, 168

UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI

# SYAIKH NURUDDIN AR-RANIRY

BANDA ACEH

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

This book presents an ethnographic study of the Jamā'ah Tablīgh in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, and Banda Aceh, Indonesia. It explores the nature of organised religious practice within this Islamic missionary group, and illustrates the situation of faith amongst the members, which is coloured by Sufist elements. A central focus of the study is an exploration of the situation of faith, or religious awareness, of members of Jamā'ah Tablīgh by undertaking a detailed examination of the aims and distinctive practices of the organisation in individual chapters. The book develops a pyramid of religious awareness which enables an understanding of the religious experiences of Muslims in terms of three aspects: sharī'ah, haqīqah (reality), and ma'rifah (gnosis). The pyramid offers a conceptual model of an internal problematic common to Muslims in relation to their beliefs, and the organisation and conduct of their daily lives. The book is particularly significant for the insights it provides into how a desire to reinstate an Islamic caliphate, as part of a return to al-Qur'an and al-Sunnah, may be realised in the contemporary period, through radical yet non-violent means, drawing heavily on the mosque-based form of government implemented by the Prophet Muhammad in Medina. This study will also prove to be useful for studies of other, non-Islamic, religious groups, where the religious person is one who submits him or herself to God. A further argument of the book is the proposal that the highest level of human being is insān kāmil (the perfect man), that is, one who has utilised his active intelligence.

**Kamaruzzaman Bustamam-Ahmad** is Lecturer at the Faculty of Shari'ah and Law of the State Islamic University (UIN) Ar-Raniriy, Banda Aceh, Indonesia. He completed his PhD in Anthropology at La Trobe University, Australia. His latest book is *Wahdatul Wujud* (2014), while he is also the co-editor of *Islamic Thought in Southeast Asia: New Interpretations and Movements* (2013).

978-1-4438-7239-3
www.cambridgescholars.com
**Cover image** *A Symbol Of Islam, The Star and Cresent in Dark Green* by Kbolino, 2006